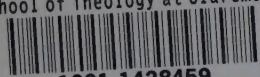


School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1428459

317/314  
N 637  
A 300

bep  
+wv

SOUTH  
CL



The Library  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE  
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA









THE GOSPEL OF SUPERMAN





THE GOSPEL OF SUPERMAN

*Of the First Edition of  
Two Thousand Copies  
this is*

*No.* **626**.....

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

THE GOSPEL OF  
SUPERMAN

*THE PHILOSOPHY OF FRIEDRICH  
NIETZSCHE*

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF  
HENRI LICHTENBERGER, WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY

J. M. KENNEDY

AUTHOR OF "THE QUINTESENCE OF NIETZSCHE"

T. N. FOULIS

13 & 15 FREDERICK STREET  
EDINBURGH: AND LONDON

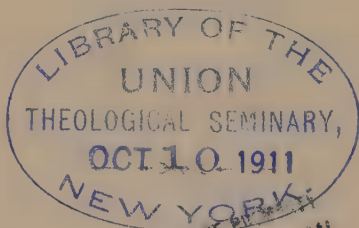
1910

B

331

L52

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



NO LONGER THE PROPERTY  
OF THE UNION THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY, N. Y.

QJ70

N67x

L69

101974

## CONTENTS

| CHAP.                                                                          | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| I. THE CHARACTER OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE -                                      | I    |
| II. NIETZSCHE'S INTELLECTUAL EMANCIPATION -                                    | 33   |
| III. NIETZSCHE THE PHILOSOPHER - - -                                           | 90   |
| IV. NIETZSCHE'S SYSTEM—NEGATIVE SIDE: MAN -                                    | 113  |
| V. NIETZSCHE'S SYSTEM ( <i>continued</i> )— POSITIVE<br>SIDE: SUPERMAN - - - - | 165  |
| VI. CONCLUSION - - - -                                                         | 193  |
| APPENDIX - - - -                                                               | 211  |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY - - - -                                                           | 217  |

Theology Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AT CLAREMONT  
California

A5772

UNION SEM. 5-8-57



## INTRODUCTION

IT is gratifying to note that the interest recently aroused in Nietzsche in English-speaking countries has reached a point that original or translated works dealing with the broad outlines or particular divisions of his philosophy have become necessary. This book of Professor Lichtenberger's, however (which has passed through fourteen editions in France), is, I believe, the first concerning Nietzsche to be translated from the French, a fact which calls for a word or two of comment.

There seems to be something in the French character and the French language which, while allowing for the clear exposition of original thought, allows likewise for the no less clear interpretation of ideas which have at first been presented to the world through the medium of a more obscure or less pliable tongue. Readers of Macaulay will remember the essay in which, referring to such men as Locke and Hobbes, he mentions that France had, during a long period, acted as the interpreter of English thought to the Continent of Europe. A particularly striking instance is the case of Jeremy Bentham, whose writings, notwithstanding their depth of thought and their applicability to the conditions and needs of the time,

were simply unreadable in their loosely-arranged English form, until at last a Frenchman, M. Dumont, translated them and put them before the public as a lucid and homogeneous work. The French, again, have not been blind to this particular gift of theirs: indeed, they have even invented a jocular anecdote about the French translator of Goethe's *Faust*, Gérard de Nerval, to whom the great German poet is said to have written: *Je ne me suis jamais si bien compris qu'en vous lisant* (I have never understood myself so well as when reading you).

What is not clear, to use Voltaire's expression, is not French; and the student of Nietzsche will doubtless appreciate the truth of this assertion in reading Professor Lichtenberger's book on Nietzsche. For the sympathetic and penetrating qualities of the French mind, added to the clearness of language already referred to, give us a distinct and unequivocal presentation of the German philosopher. In the present instance clearness of arrangement is even more necessary than clearness of style; for Nietzsche's physical condition, as is well known to those acquainted with his life, often necessitated his jotting down his thoughts in a haphazard form—a form which has been still further complicated by the posthumous publication of so many writings which had obviously not received the philosopher's finishing touches.

In dealing with this mass of material, Professor Lichtenberger has exhibited the sympathetic qualities and soundness of judgment which long



experience has led us to associate with French men of letters. His book does not profess to show how Nietzsche's philosophy may be applied to modern problems, but it gives us so definite a view of Nietzsche's life, character, and works that the reader will be at no loss as to what direction his own further studies of the philosopher should take.

What a powerful factor in modern life Nietzsche's philosophy is may be judged from the pages that follow. His distinction between master and slave morality, to mention but a single instance, is one that strikes at the very foundations of all modern "civilised" society, and suggests innumerable side issues in problems of race-development and sociology which will one day have to be faced. Again, almost any one of his incisive criticisms on art, to be met with more especially in the later works, is sufficient to arouse a keen and bitter controversy among painters, sculptors, poets, men of letters, and, in fact, all who are interested in culture and who desire to rescue it from the slough of democracy into which it has been allowed to sink. And now, having permitted myself to make these few suggestions, I think it is time for Professor Lichtenberger to speak for himself.

J. M. KENNEDY.

LONDON, *September* 1910.



# THE GOSPEL OF SUPERMAN.

---

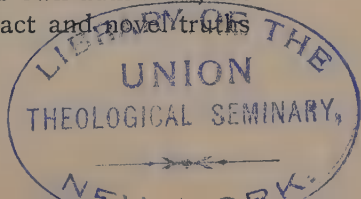
## CHAPTER I.

### THE CHARACTER OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE.

#### I.

WE should, I rather think, form a very erroneous conception of Nietzsche if we considered his works exclusively as the exposition of a philosophical theory, and gave all our attention to gathering into a well-arranged and logical system the ideas which he scattered, apparently without a uniform plan, through the fifteen volumes of his complete works. We have doubtless the right to construct a "system" of this kind; it is even indispensable, in my opinion, to apply ourselves to this work of synthesis if we would judge Nietzsche impartially as a thinker, and not content ourselves with admiring him superficially as a talented writer and penetrating moralist, the author of some brilliant "detached thoughts" or ingenious aphorisms. But before studying Nietzsche's doctrine, we must clearly come to understand that it is, on the author's own admission, not so much a collection of abstract and novel truths

A



as the living reflection of an individual character, of a temperament of a very peculiar kind, the sincere and passionate confession of a soul seldom to be met with.

In the first place Nietzsche's philosophy is strictly individualistic. "What does thy conscience tell thee?" he asks. "Thou must be what thou art." Man, then, must above all know himself, must know his body thoroughly, his instincts, his faculties; then he must draw up his rule of life to suit his personality, gauge his ambitions in accordance with his hereditary or acquired aptitudes, turn his natural gifts to the best possible advantage, as also whatever circumstances may be brought about by chance; in a word, he must correct nature by art as best he can, so as to form both his character and his life. Each of us performs this task as well as he can: there are no general and universal rules for becoming one's self. The natural inequality of man is one of Nietzsche's most profound beliefs: every one should create his own truth and morals for himself; what is good or bad, useful or harmful for one man is not necessarily so for another. In short, then, all that a thinker can do is to tell the story of his soul, to say how he has discovered himself, in what beliefs he has found inward peace, and, by his example, to exhort his contemporaries to do likewise, to seek themselves and to find themselves—but, strictly speaking, he has no doctrine; he has no desire to be the shepherd of a docile flock:

I now go alone, my disciples! Ye also now go away, and alone! So will I have it,

Verily, I advise you : depart from me, and guard yourselves against Zarathustra ! And better still : be ashamed of him ! Perhaps he hath deceived you ! . . .

Ye say, ye believe in Zarathustra ? But of what account is Zarathustra ? Ye are my believers ; but of what account are all believers ?

Ye had not sought yourselves : then did ye find me. So do all believers ; therefore all belief is of so little account.

Now do I bid you lose me and find yourselves ; and only when ye have all denied me will I return unto you.\*

And as Nietzsche is distinguished from all dogmatists in that he does not profess to bring men a new *credo*, a body of ready-made doctrines, so likewise does he differ from the majority of philosophers and scientists in that he does not appeal only to the reason of his readers, but to the entire man. He has but little regard for human reason, for what is called "soul," "spirit," "ego." Sensitiveness and intelligence are, according to him, the instruments and playthings of an unseen power which masters them and utilises them for its own ends. "Behind thy feelings and thy thoughts, O my brother, is to be found a powerful master, an unknown sage—he is called 'self' (*selbst*). He lives in thy body ; he *is* thy body." † The body with its instincts, with the "will to power" that animates it, is what Nietzsche calls man's "great reason" ; as for man's "little reason," upon which he plumes himself so readily, of the sovereign liberty of which he so often boasts, it is a precious instrument, it is true, but an imperfect and fragile one,

---

\* Thus spake Zarathustra : The Bestowing Virtue.

† Thus spake Zarathustra : The Despisers of the Body.

which the "self" makes use of to extend its range of power. For a man to exercise any influence upon another man, he must at all costs make himself be heard by this mysterious "self"; all else counts for nothing. Nothing can be more absurd than to be resolved upon logically deducing a system of philosophy from, and to persist in wishing to convince the intelligence by, rational arguments. The judgments of a higher order, those which govern the course of our life, which regulate our acts, which decide what Nietzsche calls the "Table of Values," which determine good and evil, cannot be proved: man "sees" them in some shape: the best of them are those that favour the development of the individual or of the race in the greatest degree. For Nietzsche a book is, above all, an *act*. If he professes to influence his contemporaries, it is not by his knowledge or his science, by whatever universal and impersonal qualities he may possess; but, quite on the contrary, by his own personality, by his entire being. He does not set up merely for a thinker. He does not say to mankind: "I bring you truth—an impersonal, universal truth, independent of what I am myself, and before which all human reason must bow down," but on the contrary: "Here I am, with my instincts, my beliefs, my truths, and doubtless my errors also; such as I am I say 'yea' to existence, to all its joys, as likewise to all its sorrows; see whether you too cannot find your happiness in the thoughts which have made mine." Whilst the majority of philosophers glory in *impersonalising* themselves, in giving up their *ego*, in "letting their eye become light," to use Goethe's

fine expression, Nietzsche makes his own personality the kernel of his philosophy: he spends his life in seeking himself out, and in letting us know the result of his investigations. His philosophy is therefore, above all, the history of his soul. Zarathustra, that ideal type of thinker and prophet, whose moral physiognomy he describes in such a strikingly poetical form in his most celebrated book, is at once the incarnation of his dreams and aspirations, and also, to some extent, the living demonstration of his doctrine. Thus it is by an examination of Nietzsche's personality, as revealed in his works, and by the recollections of his friends and parents, that we shall begin our study of him.

## 2.

There is a rather uncertain tradition, but one which Nietzsche pleased himself by taking for authentic, to the effect that he and his people were descended from an aristocratic Polish family of the name of Niëttsky, the members of which took refuge in Germany towards the beginning of the eighteenth century as a result of religious persecutions against Protestants. And we are tempted to admit that some "blue blood" did really run in Nietzsche's veins. This fact would perhaps help to explain the predominance in him of aristocratic instincts, uncommon, it would seem, in the respectable and cultured but modestly middle-class circle in which he was born. Nietzsche was the son of a Prussian country clergyman. But from his infancy, if we may believe what his sister tells us, he seemed

to be of a select nature, at once very energetic, refined, and passionate, recalling by many of his traits that ideal of the "master," the high-born man, whose moral instincts and beliefs he was afterwards pleased to describe. While still young, he learnt to control himself, to be always master of himself, and always to respect himself; he shows himself to be a scrupulous observer of all manners and customs; he takes pleasure in seeking solitude, in isolating himself from his comrades, and enforcing their respect by a precocious dignity of conduct and demeanour: on the other hand, he clings with his whole soul to a few chosen friends; in fine, we observe in him his instinctive repugnance towards all forms of vulgarity, the fear of all questionable connections, a constant and fastidious propriety—physical as well as moral—a horror of and contempt for every kind of lying and dissimulation. "A count Niëtzsky must not lie," he said to his sister when still a child. Now, these "aristocratic" tendencies which were beginning to appear in the child were more and more developed in the grown man, and they characterised his moral physiognomy. In his life, as also in his writings, Nietzsche is revealed to us as a heroic and dominating will, a tender and passionate heart, a delicate spirit, highly sensitive to both beauty and vulgarity, harmony and discord.

Nietzsche then, let it be said, is a soul of a very uncommon stamp. He hates all weakness, evasions, half measures. One of the most imposing and tragic figures in Ibsen's plays is the clergyman Brand, who, always faithful to his proud emblem "All or Nothing," follows the course he has mapped



out for himself without letting a single obstacle hinder his progress, pitiless both to himself and to others; he fearlessly sacrifices to his proud will his happiness, his reputation, his life, and even more, the happiness and lives of his wife and child; who clambers up the slopes of his Calvary with his feet bruised and bleeding and his heart broken: a hero at once sublime and terrifying, admirable and disquieting, until the day when his sorrowing and over-sensitive soul is swallowed up in the darkness of madness and death. Like Brand, Nietzsche is a man of "All or Nothing"; like him he attains the object of his will without ever letting himself be hindered. As he is not a man of action, but a looker-on, his heroism is perhaps less visible, less apparent. As we are but little used to look upon the affairs of thought as tragic, we may experience some difficulty in conceiving that there may be any resemblance between the heroism of the soldier, the missionary, or the explorer, who suffers and dies for fatherland, faith, or science, and the heroism of the philosopher who sacrifices his most agreeable illusions, and whatever he admires most deeply, to the exigencies of his inexorable reason, and who forces himself to think his thought to the very end, to impel it forward to the very last consequences. We are disposed to consider the sufferings of thought with some scepticism when we compare them to bodily pain, and not to look seriously upon the perils of intellectual adventures when we contrast them with the dangerous risks of real life. Still, I am inclined to admit that there are men of exceptional natures—abnormal natures, if you will—for whom

these lonely battles of thought, with their hidden sufferings and invisible dangers, are as grave and as painful a reality as the battles of life, and who, to enter fearlessly into the fray, require this same force of will which, applied in other directions, constitutes the heroism of the warrior or the sailor, for example. And for my part I readily believe that Nietzsche, without the slightest boasting, would have been entitled to add as an epigraph to any one of his books the fine expression of Turenne: "Carcass, thou tremblest? Thou wouldst tremble still more didst thou but know where I am taking thee."

Nietzsche's moral energy, like that of many other heroic natures, was tempered by a great need of friendship, admiration, and tenderness. His heart felt the necessity for a sympathetic circle where it could beat freely. Hence at every period of his life he had friends whom he loved passionately. It must be added that some of these friendships had a sad ending. Nietzsche, indeed, had the dangerous habit of seeing all his friends through rose-coloured spectacles. Free from every trace of envy, and deeply impressed at first sight by everything remarkable in those around him, he pleased himself by transforming, or rather, retouching in his imagination, the physiognomies of those around him; he saw in them more beauty, greatness, and style than they really had. In the frenzy of his enthusiastic love, he closed his eyes to their defects, their human weakness, so that he might see only their perfections, and he finally made for himself an exact and striking likeness of his friends, but one which was as ideal as the portrait of a master. It was in this way that he

became fascinated with Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner, for example, whom his inflamed and ardent imagination looked upon as the ideals of philosopher and artist ; or again with Paul Rée, a thinker of the second order, estimable and judicious, whose works he admired far above their real value. But if this faculty of thus embellishing his friends permitted him to feel the greatest possible pleasure in their company, he also found it a source of cruel disappointments. As the sense of reality never left him, and as his uncompromising intellectual integrity never allowed him to take pleasure in an illusion, he was at length forced to recognise the gap which existed between the person he loved and the ideal image he carried in his heart. Then followed inevitable disillusionings, vexations, or even a complete rupture. We shall come later to the story of his relations with Wagner, which illustrates in a striking manner this evolution in friendship. Let us now remark, however, that this apparent inconstancy in friendship, which was so painful for those who suffered from its effects, and which was often so severely and unjustly commented on by critics, has its principle, in reality, in a generous sentiment, in the need for admiring and respecting. Nietzsche was quite the opposite of those envious or critical natures who see nothing in a great man but his eccentricities, and instinctively belittle everything they consider : in his instinctive love of beauty and greatness, he refused, as long as he was able, to see the imperfections of his friends ; he made a beautiful legend of them, he exaggerated their value, free to retract his opinion afterwards. Of course this is a mistake, but it is the mistake of a noble soul.

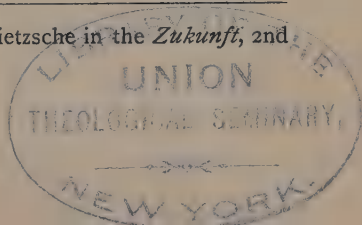
Thus friendship was for Nietzsche a source of deep joys, and also of profound sadness. He owed to it perhaps the happiest moments of his life; but his deceptions in friendship led him to know in all its bitterness the painful feeling of absolute isolation. Perhaps one of his most painful feelings was that he saw he could never communicate his feelings entirely to his friends, that he was irremediably consecrated to solitude by his own exceptional nature, by his own very greatness: "the impossibility of communicating one's self is in truth the worst of solitudes," he wrote to his sister, "the *difference of nature* is a more impenetrable mask than any iron mask; now, it is only *between equals* that there can be any real, full, perfect communication! *Between equals!* Intoxicating word, so full of consolation, of hope, of seduction, of happiness for him who has always and necessarily been solitary; who has never met a single being formed specially for himself, although he has sought for him carefully and in many directions; who in daily intercourse with his fellows has always been a man of serene and benevolent dissimulation, of wished-for and often attained conformity; who knows by experience—too long, alas!—that art of putting a good face upon matters, which is called courtesy; but who has at times known also those painful and dangerous outbursts of everything that lies hidden in his innermost being: suppressed hope, hardly restrained desire, overflowing and unexpectedly released love—the sudden madness of those moments when the Solitary throws himself into the arms of the first-comer and treats him as a friend, as a messenger of heaven, as a gift

of inestimable value, only to spurn him away with disgust an hour later—feeling disgusted also with himself, with the feeling that he has suffered some discredit, an inward fall, disgusted because he has become a stranger to himself, because he has fallen ill in his own society. *A deep man has need of friends—unless he still has his God!*”\*

The fine and tender nature of Nietzsche's soul is once more shown in his relations with women. Even in this respect his true character has often been strangely misconceived. The legend which has grown around his name is to the effect that, following the example of his master, Schopenhauer, he showed a bitter contempt for all women; and all critics quote a few cruel phrases, such as, “You are going amongst women? Don't forget your whip!” or “A learned woman must have some physiological disorder.” But this legend will be seen to be devoid of foundation if we examine Nietzsche's works more closely. It is then apparent, as we shall see further on, that the woman whom he brutalises and abuses in words is the advanced and emancipated type of woman, who would compete with man in the domain of literature, science, and economics. But if he reviles the authoress or the lady clerk, he is on the other hand full of innate and artless respect, full of pity and sincere tenderness, for the eternal feminine, such as he conceives her to be. And Nietzsche seems to have accorded this instinctive respect to the women whom he met in private life. Although

---

\* Quoted by Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche in the *Zukunft*, 2nd October 1897, p. 12 foll.



we have but few particulars regarding this part of his life, we do at least know that he had women as friends and confidantes several times; his sister, Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche, who has told us the touching story of his life; Miss Malvida de Meysenbug, authoress of the *Memoirs of an Idealist*; Mrs. Lou Andreas-Salomé, to whom during a short time he confided his moral and intellectual agonies; or, again, the young woman whose acquaintance he made at Beyreuth, and to whom he wrote letters of penetrating charm and exquisite delicacy of sentiment.\* And, from the little we know of his relationships with women, we can perceive that, if he did not know the grand passion itself, he must on the other hand have enjoyed the most subtle charm of feminine tenderness. Nietzsche's sister, who was the friend and confidante of the years of his youth, tells us that her brother never knew either great love or vulgar love. "His only passion was the search for truth, and he exhibited little concern for anything else. He was greatly provoked when, later in life, he could never rise to the height of passion-love; but all his fancies for one of the opposite sex, however charming she might be, were rapidly transformed into a cordial friendship, and nothing more." † In truth, it would seem that Nietzsche never loved but with his soul, that his love became stripped of all sensual and pathological elements to be changed into a kind of tenderness, almost free from any egoistical desire. And we can easily imagine that

---

\* Published in *Cosmopolis*, May 1897. See also Nietzsche's *Gesammelte Briefe*, vol. i. 301 foll.

† Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche's *Leben*, vol. i. 180.

this thinker, so much wrapped up in himself, must have been able to enjoy more than any one else, especially when pain and sickness had driven him into solitude, all that beneficent and consoling sweetness, all that discreet charm, to be found in the friendship of a woman. Thus we are inclined to think that Nietzsche's sentimental life differed very considerably from that of a great lover like Goethe, or a realist in love like Schopenhauer ; but that it was richer and more fecund in interesting observations than one would at first be disposed to believe. He appears to us to be an idealist in love as in friendship, and this delicate and refined idealism, which in an average man would perhaps be a sign of weakness, is on the other hand an additional charm in a nature so thoroughly virile and voluntary as that of Nietzsche.

Finally, a trait which particularly shows Nietzsche to be an aristocrat is his marked predilection for everything beautifully shaped, for purity, elegance, and politeness, and at the same time his decided hatred for everything vulgar, dirty, and disordered. This refined, uncompromising, and exclusive taste, which isolated him, when yet a child, from his school or university comrades, and which later made him look with horror on the life of a German student, with his indulgence, vulgar cordiality, and too materialistic beer-swilling, shows itself in him with all the elementary strength of a veritably natural instinct, makes its appearance everywhere in his writings, and explains most of his sympathies and antipathies. It is his taste for a beautiful form which lies at the bottom of his love for ancient civilisation, for the

Renaissance, for French culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and for contemporary France ; it is his hatred of plebeian vulgarity which dictates his severe judgments on most of the Christian apostles, in whom he thinks he recognises the souls of slaves ; on Luther, whose rustic awkwardness he detests ; on the entire democratic, feminist, socialistic, and anarchist movement of modern times ; on the German empire and the German culture of the present day. What he forgives least of all is lack of "distinction," whether physical, intellectual, or moral. His taste is, in this respect, singularly exacting and refined. His moral analyses seldom go beyond the bare statement that this or that sentiment is "noble" (*vornehm*) or not. If he despises vanity, it is because he sees the soul of a slave in the man who, to esteem himself, requires the approval of others. If he condemns pity, it is because he believes a noble soul should hide its sorrows, and consequently should not try to behold those of others, or blush if they come to light by chance ; to ask for compassion is therefore a want of dignity, to show it is a want of tact. Even truth itself, which he nevertheless seeks after passionately, he does not wish to find indiscreet or brutal : he thinks it ceases to be truth if its veil is pulled away ; he thinks it right not to wish to understand, see, and touch everything ; he quotes what a little girl said to her mother : "Is it true that God is everywhere ? But I think that is improper !" Far from being a cynic, as has often been said, he understands and honours the most delicate modesty of soul. Take, for example, his psychological analysis of this instinctive



feeling, which impels every deep spirit to hide its actual traits in a mask from the eyes of the crowd :

The intellectual haughtiness and loathing of every man who has suffered deeply . . . this silent intellectual haughtiness of the sufferer, this pride of the elect of knowledge, of the "initiated," of the almost sacrificed, finds all forms of disguise necessary to protect itself from contact with officious and sympathising hands, and in general from all that is not its equal in suffering. Profound suffering makes noble : it separates. One of the most refined forms of disguise is Epicurism, along with a certain ostentatious boldness of taste, which takes suffering lightly, and puts itself on the defensive against all that is sorrowful and profound. There are "gay men" who make use of gaiety because they are misunderstood on account of it—they *wish* to be misunderstood. There are "scientific minds" who make use of science because it gives a gay appearance, and because scientificity leads to the conclusion that a person is superficial—they *wish* to mislead to a false conclusion. There are free, insolent minds which would fain conceal and deny that they are broken, proud, incurable hearts (the cynicism of Hamlet—the case of Galiani) ; and occasionally folly itself is the mask of *over-assured* knowledge.—From which it follows that it is the part of a more refined humanity to have reverence "for the mask," and not make use of psychology and curiosity in the wrong place.\*

Let us also quote, as bearing on the same point, this further aphorism :

—— Wanderer, who art thou ? I see thee follow thy path without scorn, without love, with unfathomable eyes, wet and sad as a plummet which has returned to the light insatiated out of every depth—what did it seek down there ?—with a bosom that never sighs, with lips that conceal their loathing, with a hand which only slowly grasps : who art thou ? what hast thou done ? Rest thee here : this place has hospitality for every one—refresh thyself ! And whoever thou art, what is it that now pleases thee ? What will serve to refresh thee ?

---

\* *Beyond Good and Evil*, Aph. 270.

Only name it, whatever I have I offer thee!—"To refresh me? To refresh me? Oh, thou prying one, what sayest thou? But give me, I pray thee——" What, what? Speak out! "Another mask! A second mask!"\*

These delicate analyses of a state of mind, rare perhaps, but which seem to us to be so true and *lived*, are certainly not the work of a cynic; they rather point to one of those proud spirits who reply to too inquisitive questioners as Zarathustra did: "You ask me why? I am not one of those who may be asked for their whys!" †

It is, in truth, the pride of the free and autonomous being who is independent only upon his own will, who has overcome pain, who has shown himself superior to fate—it is this virile haughtiness of the self-respecting man which constitutes the essential trait of Nietzsche's character, as he has himself shown in that fine apologue to his Zarathustra:

When the sun stood at noon-tide, Zarathustra looked inquiringly aloft—for he heard above him the sharp call of a bird. And behold! An eagle swept through the air in wide circles, and on it hung a serpent, not like a prey, but like a friend; for it kept itself coiled round the eagle's neck.

"These are mine animals," said Zarathustra, and rejoiced in his heart.

"The proudest animal under the sun, and the wisest animal under the sun,—they have come out to reconnoitre.

"They want to know whether Zarathustra still liveth. Verily, do I still live?

"More dangerous have I found it among men than among animals; in dangerous paths goeth Zarathustra. Let mine animals lead me!"

\* *Beyond Good and Evil*, Aph. 278.

† Thus spake Zarathustra: Poets.

When Zarathustra had said this he sighed and spake thus to his heart :

“Would that I were wiser ! Would that I were wise from the very heart, like my serpent !

“But I am asking the impossible. Therefore do I ask my pride to go always with my wisdom !

“And if my wisdom should some day forsake me—alas, it loveth to fly away !—may my pride then fly with my folly !”\*

### 3.

The great, the only passion of Nietzsche's whole life was the search after truth. Let us see what, in him, is the origin of this instinct, and what particular form it assumes.

Nietzsche belonged to one of those Protestant families which are at once very pious and very cultured, in which a strong religious feeling is allied to a decided taste for science. His father and grandfather had both become clergymen after having received a wide university education ; his mother and grandmother likewise belonged to families of clergymen. It was therefore naturally decided that young Nietzsche should follow in the steps of his father and enter the church. Those who knew him in infancy remember him to have been grave, modest, and pleasant, preoccupied with his own thoughts, deeply religious, not only in words but also in his actions ; when he was six years old his schoolfellows called him “the little parson.” Up to the time of his confirmation, which took place at the age of seventeen, his faith remained whole ; and when,

---

\* Zarathustra's prologue, sec. 10.

three years later, as he was leaving his school at Pforta, he addressed the usual written expression of gratitude to those who had watched over his early progress through the world, it is God to whom his thoughts first turn: "To Him, to Whom I owe almost everything, do I offer the first-fruits of my gratitude; what else can I offer Him but the fervent adoration of my heart, which feels more than ever the warmth of His love—the love to which I owe this hour, the happiest of my existence. May God always have me in His keeping." \*

For a few years before this, however, a change was taking place in Nietzsche's spirit, which the documents published by his sister enable us to follow with great exactitude. The Protestant believer, who belonged, if anything, to the more liberal-minded body of churchmen, never subordinated science to religion, but believed that there was perfect harmony between a religious faith and an entirely independent science, so that when he came to study nature, history, and philosophy, he was permitted and even recommended to search for "truth" without bias of any kind, without desiring beforehand to find in science an apology for religion. Freedom to search for truth, coupled with the conviction that this free research would spontaneously lead to religion, is one of the characteristics of Protestantism, and especially of modern German Protestantism. The love of God, and the belief that this love must guide our whole existence, are reconciled by Protestantism—in theory, at least—with the love of truth, and the

---

\* Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche's *Leben*, i. 194.

conviction that the love of truth must be the guiding principle of our whole life. This was the point of view of Nietzsche during his years at college. From this time he feels "an extraordinary desire which impels him to acquire knowledge, a universal culture," he draws up a long list of the different sciences which he would like to master; but he adds at the end of his list: "and especially *Religion*, the solid foundation of all knowledge." \* Gradually, however, with but little agitation, this belief in the harmony between religion and science leaves him. In 1862, the year following his confirmation, he wrote a curious philosophical essay on "Fate and History," which shows us that his thought has already measured "the immense ocean of ideas," and that he thinks of "venturing on the sea of doubt," but he recognises that it is sheer madness for a still inexperienced mind to undertake such a voyage without either compass or pilot. He sees from this moment that "all Christianity rests upon hypotheses: the existence of God, immortality, the authority of the Bible, inspiration, etc., will always remain problems. I have tried to deny all that: oh! it is easy to destroy, but after that one must build! And even to destroy seems to be easier than it is in reality; our inner conscience is so strongly prejudiced by the impressions of our infancy, by the influence of our parents and our masters, that these deeply-rooted prejudices are not easily got rid of by logical arguments or a simple

---

\* Diary, under date 25th October 1859; quoted in the *Leben*, i. 125 foll.

decree of the will. The power of habit, the need of an ideal, the rupture with the present world, the doubt which asks anxiously whether humanity has been the victim of an illusion for two thousand years, the feeling of our own temerity and presumption : all these sentiments carry on an indecisive battle within us, until the day when bitter experiences and saddening events lead our hearts back to the old beliefs of our childhood" : if he still remains a Christian, his Christianity is purely symbolical.

"Christianity," he writes again, "is essentially an affair of the heart ; it is only when the Christian idea has in some way become incarnated in us, when it has become a part of our sensibility, that we are true Christians. The principal doctrines of Christianity merely express the fundamental truths of the human heart ; they are symbols, just as the highest truths must be symbols of truths still higher. To attain happiness by means of faith is only that old truth, that the heart alone, and not knowledge, gives us happiness. The fact that God became man merely teaches us that man must not look for his happiness in infinity, but should build his heaven on earth. . . . Amidst the anguish of doubt and inner battles humanity attains its majority, its manly age : it perceives in itself *the beginning, middle, and end of religion.*" \* Less than three years later we find that Nietzsche has taken a decisive step. He has recognised that man must choose between two alternatives : either he chooses religious faith, subscribes to the beliefs, whatever

---

\* *Leben*, i. 321.

they may be, which his ancestors have handed down to him; he seeks—and finds—in the *subjective* phenomenon of faith peace and tranquillity of soul (without this faith's proving anything in favour of the *objective* truth of this belief), or he chooses, on the other hand, the solitary and difficult path of the seeker, who desires not peace and happiness, but truth—truth at any price, even though it be terrible and hideous; so he walks on alone, his footsteps often faltering, his mind troubled, his conscience full of anxiety, his heart broken—“towards the eternal end of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good.”\* For Nietzsche the question, put in this way, was answered in advance: he would have been unfaithful to his strongest instincts, he would have acted against his innermost conscience, if he had not renounced the broad and easy path of faith to struggle through the “heroic” path of free search.

When Nietzsche sundered himself from Christianity, he was well aware of the great importance of what he was doing. In all his works he speaks of the “Death of God” as the most noteworthy event in the whole history of humanity, as the most formidable overthrowing in the history of human existence, one which at the present day is only beginning to make its effects felt, and which cannot be consummated for centuries. In *The Joyful Wisdom* he has given striking expression to this idea by relating to us the discourse of a madman who runs about in clear daylight, with a lantern in his hand, looking for God:

---

\* *Leben*, i. 216 foll.

“ . . . Where is God ? ” he cried. “ I will tell you, *We have killed Him*, you and I ! We are all His murderers ! But how did we do it ? How did we drink the ocean ? Who gave us the sponge to wash off the entire horizon ? What did we do when we separated this earth from its sun ? Whither is it travelling now ? Whither are we travelling ? Away from all suns ? Do we not keep moving continuously ? Backwards, sideways, forward, in every direction ? Is there still a height and a depth ? Are we not wandering towards everlasting annihilation ? Do we not perceive the indications of this immense void ? Is it not colder ? Is not the night becoming darker and darker ? Must we not light our lanterns at noon ? Do you not already hear the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God ? Do you not already smell the putrefaction of the Almighty ?—for [even the gods decay ! God is dead ! God will remain dead ! And we have killed Him ! How shall we be consoled for this, we murderers of murderers ? He whom the world held to be most sacred and most powerful has bled on our knives—who shall wash the stain of this blood from us ? In what water can we be purified ? What form of expiation must we invent ? Is not the very greatness of this act too great for us ? Must not we ourselves become Gods to seem worthy of it ? Never before was so great a deed performed—and all those born after us will, by that very fact, belong to a higher form of history than any that has hitherto existed ! ” At this point the madman stopped speaking and looked at his hearers again. They too were silent, and looked at him uneasily. At last he flung his lantern on the ground, where it broke in pieces and went out. “ I am here too early,” he said ; “ the time has not yet come. This dreadful event is still on its way, it is approaching ; but it has not yet reached the ears of men. Time is needed for people to see and understand thunder and lightning, the glow of the stars, and deeds, even after they have been accomplished. This deed lies further from you than the farthest constellations—and yet you yourselves performed it ! ” \*

---

\* *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 125.



Whilst clearly recognising, however, the exceptional gravity of what he was doing, Nietzsche broke away from Christianity without violence and laceration. His rupture was not an act of revolt; for traditional Christianity was perfectly adapted to his instincts: it was as easy and natural for him to fulfil the duties of a Christian as to follow his own inclinations.\* And again his reason had not to bring the least pressure to bear on his instinct to compel him to renounce his beliefs. Nietzsche was never tempted to close his eyes of his own free will to the "Death of God," to impose silence on his reason, and to take refuge in the arms of religion. If he parted from Christianity, it was not because God seemed to him to be logically refuted, it was above all because his religious instinct emphatically forbade him to continue in a belief which appeared to him to be illusory. Nietzsche was literally an atheist by religion, and that is why he was such without despair and without moral anxieties. "We can see," he says, "what, in reality, vanquished the Christian God: it was Christian morality itself, the notion of sincerity applied with an ever-growing rigour; it was the Christian conscience, sharpened in the confessionals, which transformed and sublimated itself to the point of becoming the scientific conscience, the intellectual 'cleanliness' desired at all costs." †

We can now understand the phenomenon which took place in Nietzsche's soul. As a good Pro-

---

\* Mme. Andreas-Salomé, *Nietzsche in seinen Werken*, p. 48.

† *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 357.

testant he had believed in both truth and the traditional God, without separating them from each other in his worship. But his religious fervour was really directed to the "God of truth," and when he gradually came to perceive that he must choose between "God" and "Truth" he remained *in reality* faithful to his religious instinct by sacrificing a historic and traditional belief to a profound inner conviction. And this conviction, of which we now know the final origin, was and remained the guiding star of his entire thought and life: for Nietzsche did not separate his life from his thought, and *lived* his atheism as he had formerly *lived* his Christianity. Urged on by this all-powerful instinct of intellectual sincerity, he demolished, stone by stone, the whole edifice of the old world founded upon the belief in God. He ceased to believe in the providential goodness and order of Nature, to see in history the proofs of a divine reason and the sign of a moral will guiding the destinies of humanity, to interpret the events of our lives as trials sent by God to put us in the way of salvation. He called in question all the religious beliefs which had consoled mankind for century after century, and all the values which they had recognised. Determined to think his thought out to the utmost limit, he cast doubts upon morals, even upon truth itself: he asked himself up to what point it was right to prefer good to evil, truth to error. And the more he plunged into this state of negation, the more distinctly did he discover the positive end towards which he was tending; and he formulated with an ever-growing clearness his

personal and individual reply to the problem of the sense of life: "*All Gods are dead: now we will that the Superman shall live.*"\* By losing his God, Nietzsche had discovered himself.

Critics have often, and rightly so, noted the variations in Nietzsche's thought at different times in his life; they have studied the evolution of his ideas and determined the different stages through which he had to pass before arriving at the definite conception of his ideal. He himself was aware of these changes, and often compared himself to a serpent casting its skin. He knew that when he quitted the peaceful sanctuary of faith he would meet with innumerable adventures: life henceforth seemed to him to be no longer a duty, a fact, or a fancy; but as matter for experiment in the hands of the seeker.† He looked upon himself as an adventurer ceaselessly waging war, for whom defeats are as instructive as victories; or as a mountaineer, ever ready to venture upon the most dangerous peaks, who without either truce or rest continues to ascend higher and higher, always changing his horizon, resolved never to stop, to brave the cold, precipices, and solitude, to ascend where the biting wind sweeps along the little flakes of snow—higher, ever higher.

Thus Nietzsche, who defined life as "that which must always surpass itself," believed that change was an element necessary to his existence. Let us not forget, however, that his life also shows a

---

\* *Zarathustra*, The Bestowing Virtue, 3.

† *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 324.

magnificent unity. It is always wholly dominated by the same instinct, by this desire to be invariably sincere with itself, and at all costs. It is wholly devoted to the examination of one single problem: "What is the sense of life for man, what is the sense of life *for me*, it being granted that God does not exist?" And to this problem Nietzsche applies all his energy and strength: "'Impersonality' is of no value either on earth or in heaven," he says somewhere; "for all great problems *great love* is necessary: and only minds which are strong, robust, sure, and solidly built on their foundations are capable of such love. There is a radical difference between the thinker who faces his problems 'personally,' who finds his destiny in them, his sorrow as well as his greatest happiness; and the man who touches upon such problems 'impersonally,' and who can only seize and touch them with the feelers, so to speak, of cold and curious thought. It is quite certain beforehand that the latter will find nothing at all: for great problems, even supposing for the moment that they let themselves be grasped, will not let themselves be *retained* by witlings or milksops,—a taste which, indeed, they share with all the brave little women."\* In the great problem which he set himself at the outset of his life, Nietzsche really finds his destiny, his sorrow, and his happiness; he embraces it without faltering, he struggles with it body to body, like Israel with its God. And when at length madness came to end his conscient existence, he was already

---

\* *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 345.

chanting his song of victory. . . . And, after all, is not that the most desirable of destinies?

Nietzsche is not only a thinker; he is also an artist, and his artistic gift is as precocious and as deep as his scientific and religious instinct. Music, a taste for which was hereditary in his family, especially attracted him. While still a child he became enthusiastic over the great masters of German music: Bach and Beethoven, Mozart and Haydn, Schubert and Mendelssohn; and later on over Wagner also, who early became one of his favourites. When about nine years of age he began to compose little pieces of music; and improvising soon became one of his favourite amusements; he let his fingers run over the keys just as the hazard of his reverie impelled him. This does not imply that he paid no attention to the serious study of music: with that conscientiousness which he always observed he worked seriously at his piano, and in time was able to play fairly well. He read over an enormous amount of music; later on he took up harmony, and assiduously studied composition. At one time he was actually on the point of devoting himself exclusively to music; in a diary written in 1869, he states that he would have become a musician had circumstances permitted. Although he soon gave up the thought of making music his career—a career for which, indeed, he had not sufficient aptitude—a taste for music remained with him throughout his life. His talent for improvising was always remarkable, and called forth the admiration of Mrs. Cosima Wagner; and even at Rosenlaur in 1877 charmed the

Emperor and Empress of Brazil. He was particularly attracted by all the obscure problems of musical æsthetics, which he considered with the double qualifications of philosopher and artist.

From his childhood Nietzsche was also attracted by poetry. His sister has preserved a large number of his early verses, written for the most part between 1858 and 1864, which testify to a delicate sensibility, and to a real gift for verse-making.

Later on, at different times in his life, chiefly in 1877, 1882, and 1888, he wrote a large number of poems, principally of a philosophical character, among which we find scattered some beauties of the very highest order.

But even if his poetical vein never dried up, we can, I think, affirm that it was the practice of writing poetry which taught him to become such a fine prose writer. I am aware that certain German critics protest against Nietzsche's reputation as a stylist; and I admit that a stranger is hardly sufficiently competent to pass judgment on the style of a work written in a language which is not his own mother tongue. I nevertheless think that German opinion to-day almost generally recognises the high literary value of Nietzsche's work. At all events, so far as a Frenchman is concerned, his "writing," so neat and coloured, so nervous and flexible, so rich in picturesque expressions and in formulæ struck with all the care of medals, forms singularly attractive reading; his sentence is evidently written and re-written, chiselled with exquisite minuteness by a virtuoso of the pen; with eagerly-sought art, fully alive to what it is about, and very refined:

nevertheless there is something natural about it all, something sprightly, graceful, and lively which we rarely meet with in German prose, often so tiring to French ears on account of its lumbering constructions and the heaviness of its appearance. Nietzsche's style is essentially passionate and lyrical: in his most subtle psychological analyses, in his most abstract reasonings, we always feel that he is not thinking with his intelligence alone, but with his whole being, and that he is putting something of himself into every one of his ideas. He is not only a brilliant moralist after the style of Amiel, for example, an acknowledged master of aphorism: he knows when to seize the opportunity of rising to the most pathetic lyrism. It may be exaggeration, perhaps, to compare his prose poem of *Zarathustra* to Goethe's *Faust*, as some have done; Nietzsche's work is much less "human" than that of Goethe; and I fear it will never be fully understood outside a comparatively small circle of refined spirits—unsatiated spirits, if you will; degenerate, even. But I think that the reader who has familiarised himself with the symbolic and dithyrambic style of this work, and with its language which will at first appear so unusual, will only with difficulty be able to suppress a singularly intense emotion, an almost physical emotion, in fact, comparable only to that which we experience when we hear certain musical selections. In this poetic prose we seem to feel the presence of a passionate musician; and we can easily understand that one of the masters of the young German musical school, Dr. Richard Strauss, chose Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*

as the subject of one of his best known symphonic compositions.

Aristocratic by instinct, enamoured with truth and art, at once intellectual and sensitive, headstrong and passionate; thinker, scientist musician, poet, Nietzsche appears to us as a singularly rich and complex nature. But this variety of instincts, tastes, and aptitudes does not in any way detract from the essential unity of his personality, as is the case with so many other modern spirits. Nothing would be more incorrect than to compare him to Heine, for example, whom we see fluctuating all his life between the opposite tendencies of his reason and sensibility, atheist by his intelligence, vaguely religious by instinct, in love at once a believer and a sceptic, democratic and socialistic in abstract reasoning, and fiercely aristocratic in his manner of feeling. Nietzsche well perceived the complexity of every modern mind: "How simple men were in Greece," he says, "*in the images they made of themselves!* How far we go beyond them as regards knowledge of man! But how sinuous and complex seems our conception of a spirit when we compare ourselves with the Greeks! If we wished, if we dared, to create an architecture after our own type of spirit (but we are too craven-hearted for that) we should have to use a labyrinth as model."\* Moreover, he remarked the great advantage presented by this complexity of the contemporary spirit to the philosopher who was seeking for truth: he will find in himself a subject of study, richer and

---

\* *Dawn of Day*, Aph. 169.



more interesting according as his instincts are more varied and developed, according as the labyrinth of his soul has deeper galleries and more obscure recesses to be explored. So Nietzsche demands no more than that he should constantly widen the range of his experiments. He forcibly expresses this sentiment in an aphorism entitled the *Sigh of the Seeker*: "How great is my avidity! In my soul there is no indifference—but a 'Self' greedy for everything, which would fain see out of the eyes and seize by the hands of many individuals, as through its own eyes, its own hands—a 'Self' which would lose nothing of what might belong to it! Oh! how that greed burns within me! Oh! could I only be re-born in a hundred other beings! He who does not know this sigh by his own experience does not know likewise the passion for truth."\*

But if man must utilise all his instincts, good as well as bad, in the search for truth, if he must consider his life and his being as matter for experiment, he must on the other hand take care that the unity of his personality is not disturbed. If his central force, the will, is weakened, if it does not maintain at all costs a rigorous hierarchy of the instincts, if the soul becomes a field of battle of instincts which have become emancipated and struggle blindly for power without being mastered by another power which restrains them and guides them,—the individual suffers an irremediable decay. *Anarchy of the instincts* is one of the gravest symptoms of decadence; it shows itself only in beings

---

\* *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 249.

who are very degenerate and tending towards death. As for Nietzsche, whose will is developed to an extraordinary degree, the harmonious unity of his personality is never menaced. We never find him at war with himself, irresolute, wavering. In spite of his complexity he is "all of a piece": when he thinks or acts—for he looks upon thinking and acting as all one—it is his whole being which thinks and acts; all his faculties, his will, his intelligence, his sensibility, his artistic taste, unite irresistibly to take him whithersoever he wishes to go. The story of his life will show us the evolution of an individuality as powerful as it is rich, knowing at an early age the end towards which it was tending, and thenceforward proceeding invariably towards this end: he may happen to be deceived, external influences may seduce him into a road which is not his; but immediately afterwards, led on by a sure instinct, he returns to the true path. In view of the attainment of his ideal he guides and disciplines the varied multitude of special faculties which are at his disposal, and he concentrates them all upon the great task which he has assigned himself; until the day when, after years of struggles and attempts he finally reaches the full knowledge, the full mastery, of himself, and in the complex and harmonious soul of his Zarathustra he incarnates the innumerable aspirations of his aristocratic, prophetic, and artistic nature.

## CHAPTER II

### NIETZSCHE'S INTELLECTUAL EMANCIPATION.

#### I.

THERE are not many events connected with Nietzsche's outward life; and it may be summed up in a few words. He was born at Röcken, on October 15th, 1844, where his father carried out the duties of a clergyman. When he was five years old his father died, and in 1850 he removed with the rest of the family to Naumburg, where he first went to school. At the age of fourteen (October 1858) he was entered as a boarder at the college of Pforta, a famous old school, where a number of scientists and men of letters—among them being Klopstock, Fichte, Schlegel, and Ranke—had received their early education. Six years later (September 1864) he quitted this school with the usual leaving certificate, and began his university studies. The choice of a career had been a difficult matter for him, every kind of trade and speciality being repugnant to him on account of his taste for "universal culture." Having only for a moment thought of becoming a musician, he finally decided to study classical philology. He spent two terms at Bonn University (1864-5), then four at Leipzig

University (1865-7), where he worked chiefly at Greek philology, and became one of the favourite pupils of Ritschl, the foremost German philologist of that time. He then underwent his military training, interrupted after a short time by an injury to his chest, received while mounting his horse, which compelled him to spend a long time in hospital. After this he returned to Leipzig to prepare the thesis for his degree. A short time later, even before he had taken his degree, he was elected a professor at Bâle University, in February 1869; and the University of Leipzig granted him his degree without examination.

During the next ten years Nietzsche led a quiet life, absorbed in his duties as a university professor, delivering his lectures as regularly as his unsettled state of health permitted; and, in addition, taking charge of the higher Greek class in the Bâle *Pädagogium* (an intermediate establishment between schools and universities). During the academic year he lived very much to himself, being, nevertheless, highly esteemed by all, scarcely ever going beyond a small circle of intimate friends, of whom the place of honour is due to Jacob Burckhardt, the well-known art historian; but, besides these, he frequently went to see Richard Wagner and his wife, Mrs. Cosima Wagner, in their hermitage at Tribschen, near Lucerne, where he was received as a friend of the family, and where, from 1869 to 1872 (in which year Wagner removed to Bayreuth), he went twenty-three times, either on visits or short stays. During the Easter, Whitsun, or summer holidays he usually travelled about the Oberland,

near the lake of Geneva, or the Italian lakes. The only important occurrence in this quiet life was the war of 1870, in which Nietzsche took part as an ambulance attendant; but his constitution was not equal to the severe strain, and at the end of a very short time he was forced to return home, seriously ill. Apart from this painful incident, the only important events in Nietzsche's life were his literary and philosophical works, which all relate to two great subjects: the study of Greek antiquity on the one hand, and the criticism of modern civilisation on the other. His first great work, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), which caused considerable commotion and gave rise to an acrimonious newspaper correspondence at the time of its appearance, dealt in particular with the problem of Hellenism, and outlined a kind of general philosophy of Greek culture.\* His next works, the *Thoughts out of Season*, were devoted to the study of contemporary questions. The first two, *David Strauss* (1873) and *The Use and Misuse of History* (1874), were bold attacks against the German culture of the time and exaggeration in the study of history. In the last two, *Schopenhauer as Educator* (1874), and *Richard*

---

\* *The Birth of Tragedy* was violently attacked by Wilamowitz Möllendorf in *Zukunftsphilologie! eine Erwiderung auf F. Nietzsches Geburt der Tragödie*, Berlin, 1872; while it was defended by Richard Wagner in an open letter to Nietzsche which appeared in the *Norddeutsche allgem. Zeitung* on June 23, 1872, and is reproduced in Wagner's complete works. Nietzsche's book was likewise defended by Erwin Rohde in *Afterphilologie. Sendschreiben eines Philologen an R. Wagner*, 1872. Möllendorf replied to his adversaries in *Zukunftsphilologie, 2tes Stueck*, Berlin, 1873.

*Wagner at Bayreuth* (1876), Nietzsche sketches the figures of two geniuses who seemed to him worthy to be the masters of the rising generation, and capable of guiding it towards an ideal higher than that which satisfies the modern "philistine."

The year 1876, however, saw important changes in Nietzsche's interior and exterior life. The great event of his interior life at this time was the breaking of his friendship with Wagner, to whom the Bayreuth festivities of August 1876 dealt a mortal blow—we shall later study in detail the causes of this quarrel, which was one of the greatest sorrows of Nietzsche's life. About the same time the state of his health, already seriously endangered by violent convulsions which broke out towards the beginning of 1875 and 1876, forced him to take a year's holiday, which he spent partly in Italy, staying in Sorrento until May 1877, and partly in the Swiss mountains. After this rest he tried to carry out his duties again, despite fresh attacks of illness; he recommenced his lectures; and in 1878 published his *Human, All-too-Human*, and in the following year the *Miscellaneous Opinions and Apophthegms* and *The Traveller and his Shadow*. But his health was too much undermined for him to continue his duties as professor with regularity, and especially for him to find the energy necessary for his own private works, as well as for conscientiously fulfilling his professional duties. Even at the end of 1877 he had, at his own request, been released from his functions at the *Pädagogium*; in the spring of 1879 he resigned his professorship at the university. A new life was opening out

before him, uncertain and precarious, painful and fragile, and, above all, a solitary one; but a free and independent life, nevertheless, in which he could devote every moment of respite granted him by death to the completion of his great philosophical work.

## 2.

It was not alone out of mere enthusiasm that Nietzsche, towards the close of his period of study at Pforta, had decided to follow an "academic" career, and to prepare himself for a post as professor of philology. One of the principal reasons which determined him to take this course was purely negative: he could not think of any other career for which he felt himself to be better prepared, either by his tastes and natural aptitudes or his former studies; he believed that, as a university professor, he would, in the first place, have sufficient periods of well-earned leisure for his own personal studies, and, in the second, a sufficiently useful sphere of activity; and, finally, an independent position, either from a social or political point of view.\* It was probably these highly practical considerations which exercised the greatest influence on his final decision. But, besides these, there were other and more intellectual motives which urged Nietzsche to the study of philology.

The chief one was beyond doubt the desire to

---

\* See his *curriculum vitæ* of 1864, his diary of 1865, and a letter of 1868 to Erwin Rohde, quoted in the *Leben*, i. 190, 211, 270 foll.

be "Master" in a well-defined speciality. Nietzsche carefully pondered over the amount of danger that there was in this desire for universal culture which was his dominating instinct. He came to understand early in life that if he threw out tentacles in all directions, and acquired a superficial knowledge of every science without having the courage to limit his curiosity, he would infallibly become a dilettante. Now, his scrupulous and conscientious nature could never be satisfied with a heap of incomplete and badly-digested knowledge. From his early youth he felt an aversion—which continued to increase—for "the representative of modern education," the journalist, "the literary man who *is* nothing, but *represents* almost everything, who plays the part of connoisseur, and who, in all modesty, sees that he gets money, glory, and honour from his position." \* The knowledge he wished to acquire was the real, solid knowledge of the "master" who, in a restricted sphere, thanks to patient and careful work, arrives at definite results; it was his ambition to become a good workman in some corner of the vast field of science. From this point of view philology attracted him by the rigour of its method, by the minuteness of its detailed researches, by that dryness and even aridity which made it an unpopular subject with the great public.

What further pleased him in philology was that it was "out of season," "un-present" (*unzeitgemäss*) to use the expression which he himself popularised. The vulgar mob usually reproaches the antiquary

---

\* *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 366.



with losing his time in studying far-off things, something dead and useless, instead of giving his attention to questions of the day. Now, Nietzsche is grateful to philology just because it is not a utilitarian science, but rather an occupation for aristocrats, mandarins of the spirit; he is grateful to it because it exacts from its followers meditation, silence, judicious and patient slowness: all of which are unknown to the busy, hustling, superficial man of the present day. "Philology is that venerable art which exacts from its followers one thing above all—to step to one side, to leave themselves spare moments, to grow silent, to become slow—the leisurely art of the goldsmith applied to language: an art which must carry out slow, fine work, and attains nothing if not *lento*. For this very reason philology is now more desirable than ever before; for this very reason it is the highest attraction and incitement in an age of 'work': that is to say, of haste, of unseemly and immoderate hurry-scurry, which is intent upon 'getting things done' at once, even every book, whether old or new. It itself, perhaps, will not get things done so hurriedly: it teaches how to read *well*: *i.e.* slowly, profoundly, the mental doors ajar, with delicate fingers and eyes. . . ."

\* Finally, he willingly accepted the prospect of consecrating his life to philology, because he had firmly decided not to practise this science as a laborious and unintelligent work, not to lose himself in the pragmatic and micrographic study of trifling details, not to practise the cult of the

---

\* *Dawn of Day*, Preface, sec. 5.

variant *per se*, not to rejoice in a sterile accumulation of aimless and uninteresting observations on petty details; but to act as a philosophico-artistic philologist. He believed, indeed, that the classical ideal remained an imperishable model for our modern epoch; and that no industrial progress, no school regulations, no social or political education of the masses, could ever prevent us from once more becoming barbarians on the very day we ceased to admire the noble simplicity and quiet dignity of Hellenic art. More than this, he was convinced that this Greek civilisation, so disdainfully rejected by the apostles of modern ideas and scientific progress, was in reality far superior to our own, that the Greeks had approached more closely than we to a solution of the problem of existence, and that they were thus our masters not only in the matter of taste, but also, in a general way, in the whole art of life. In this way the task of the philologist seemed to his eyes to be singularly vast and beautiful: he was no longer concerned with the minute scrutiny of texts or the making of new conjectures, but with the revivifying of the very soul of ancient Greece; with finding out how the Greek spirit could have raised itself to the high point of perfection which, by an examination of the works it has bequeathed to us, we see it had attained; with studying the physical conditions, the religious beliefs, the political and social organisation, and the climatic or ethnological influences which permitted the Greek people to become developed to such an extraordinary degree: in a word, to replace the history of Hellenism in the position it occupied in European

civilisation, and to see what these moderns have still to learn from the Greeks. To deal with the eternal problems of humanity by a thorough study of the ancient spirit, such was the great programme that Nietzsche planned for himself from the moment he took up his professorship at Bâle University: "Philology," he said at the close of his inaugural speech, "is neither a Muse nor a Grace, but a messenger of the Gods; and as the Muses descended of yore to the piteous and afflicted rustics of Bœotia, so also does this messenger come down to-day to a world full of dark colours and dismal images, full of deep and incurable sufferings, and consoles us by calling up the clear and beautiful figures of a far-off, marvellous land, jealously watched over by fortune, and situated under the liquid clearness of Ionian skies."\*

Nietzsche turned all his attention to the problem of Hellenic civilisation. When we look through his essays and criticisms bearing on this matter, we may well be amazed at the huge amount of work he performed during the ten years he occupied his professorial post; especially when we recollect that in this period his attention was simultaneously given to philosophy, literary criticism, Wagnerian propaganda, and Greek philology. Now, his philological work was itself enormous. *The Birth of Tragedy*, with the preliminary studies which preceded it, took up but a small part of his activity.† A glance

---

\* *Homer and Classical Philology*, ad fin.

† The preparatory studies to *The Birth of Tragedy* were later on published with the complete works. It is evident from these essays that the *Birth* itself was only a fragment of a much more extended work on Greece which Nietzsche

through the list of lessons and lectures given by Nietzsche from 1869 to 1879\* is sufficient to show us the variety of subjects he dealt with: among the most important matters to which he devoted consecutive series of lessons we may mention the history of Greek literature, the history of religious antiquities, rhetoric and rhythm, and the history of Greek philosophy up to and including Plato. We see him at the same time turning his attention to original researches on the Greek philosophers from Thales to Socrates† and the rivalry between Homer and Hesiod, proposing a new theory of Greek versification, preparing a philological and historical commentary on the *Choephores*, beginning investigations into the æsthetics of Aristotle, and works on Demosthenes and Cicero.‡ He aimed, in short,

---

had in mind, but which, for many reasons, he simplified considerably.

\* A full list of the lectures given by Nietzsche at Bâle University may be found in his sister's *Leben*, ii. pt. i. 324.

† Nietzsche began these researches by strictly philological works: *De Laertii Diogenis fontibus* (Rheinisches Museum, 1868); *Analecta Laertiana* (Rhein. Mus., 1870); *Beitraege zur Quellenkunde und Kritik des Laertius Diogenes* (programme of the Bâle High School, Easter, 1870). At four different times between 1869 and 1876 he took his pupils through a course of ante-Platonic philosophy. As a result of these varied researches we find in his works fragments of a great book which he did not finish: *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of Greece*.

‡ These philological works also include: *Der Florentinische Tractat ueber Homer und Hesiod* (Rhein. Mus.), and a critical edition of the *Certamen quod dicitur Homeri et Hesiodi e Codice Florentino post Henricum Stephanum* (*Acta Soc. Phil. Lips.*).

during a period of university lectures, which he intended to spread over seven or eight years, at reviewing every branch of Greek civilisation, and he purposed devoting another ten years to the composition of one great work which should synthesise his fixed ideas concerning the problem of Hellenism. All these works, however, remained in fragments or in rough drafts. From 1876, indeed, the state of Nietzsche's health prevented him from undertaking the necessary research work ; and, besides, his mind had turned to other problems. But the sketches which have been preserved suffice to show us what his essential ideas were, and also with what conscientiousness he had carried out his functions as a philologist. Whatever opinion we may hold as to the tendencies of his mind, his methods, or the value of the results he obtained, we must at all events acknowledge the loyalty and sincerity of the immense effort he made to assimilate, in its entirety, the science which it was his duty to teach.

This is not the place, however, to comment upon or discuss Nietzsche's philological works ; our task is simply to find out what effect these researches had upon him. His intention, we said, was to deal with the problem of existence by studying the solution given to it by the Greeks. Let us see what, according to him, this solution is, and what value he attributes to it.

Nietzsche's starting point is Schopenhauer's metaphysics. He admits, with the great pessimist, that the essence of the world is will ; that this will is the same in all beings, and makes its presence felt in the entire creation. This will is a painful

desire, thanks to which the life of man is a never-ending struggle with the certainty of being defeated, and which may be summed up thus : "to will without cause, to suffer continually, and so on for generation after generation, until our planet breaks up into fragments." From the point of view of the intelligence, the world does not justify its existence. The reason calculates that, in all the life around us, the amount of suffering is far greater than the amount of happiness, and hence concludes that man should aim at the abolition of his will : the will once denied, the external world will collapse of itself, since it is merely the will objectised by the action of the principle of individuation.

But, Nietzsche goes on, breaking away here from Schopenhauer's doctrine, the world, unjustifiable from a rational point of view, may perhaps be justified as an æsthetic phenomenon, as the vision of a demiurge-artist, as the supreme work of art, causing its creator to feel a supreme æsthetic voluptuousness. According to this hypothesis, man should make an effort to take part in this vision of beauty by developing his sense of the beautiful, contemplating the universe, and considering himself only from the point of view of the beautiful ; at the moment of artistic creation, we may perhaps feel something of the unbounded joy of the creator. Now, as an individual conditioned by the principle of individuation, and living in the world of phenomena, man is an artist by the gift of creative vision. He can create in himself, either directly (as artist-creator), or mediately (by looking at a work of art which can forcibly call up interior vision) images

of the exterior world which cause him to feel artistic gratification. The essence of the æsthetic act is the *creation of an interior image*, it is consequently a *vision*, a *dream*, of the external world, not only in its beauty and joy, but also in its dreadfulness and sorrow. It is this gift for creating images of real life which Nietzsche calls the *Apollonian* faculty. In the first rank of Apollonian art stand sculpture and painting, or again, epic poetry. It is a dream that man wishes to continue to dream, and in which he takes delight while fully conscious of its unreality. The Apollonian man escapes pessimism by the contemplation of beauty; he says to life: I desire thee, for thy image is beautiful; thou art worthy to be dreamed!

But man is not only a being limited by the principle of individuation; he has cognisance of himself as well as of a will; he feels himself to be a particle of that will scattered throughout the universe, he feels himself identical with all that lives and suffers, with the whole universe. It is when in the state of intoxication and ecstasy brought about by drugs, or by natural phenomena such as the return of spring, that man is suddenly conscious of the removal of the barrier of individuality which separates him from the rest of the universe, and takes cognisance of his union with nature herself. This is what Nietzsche calls the *Dionysian* state. The natural language of the Dionysian man is music, which is, according to Schopenhauer, the direct expression of the eternal and primordial will, the complete image of this eternal desire which is at the bottom of the universe. In his Dionysian state

man considers his knowledge of universal suffering, of illusion, and of the pains of individuation, as true; he thus inclines to a pessimistic conception of the universe. But at the same time he takes cognisance of his eternity, for his individual will is identical with universal will. Confronted with the terrifying sight of the destruction of everything perishable—for example, when witnessing the death of a tragic hero—he feels rising in himself the knowledge that the eternal life of the will is not attained by the death of the individual. The Dionysian man escapes pessimism because he perceives the eternity of the will under the ever-flowing stream of phenomena; he says to life: I desire thee; for thou art eternal life!

It was by the aid of these two beneficent illusions, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, that the Greeks, during the finest epoch of their civilisation, triumphed over pessimism, and made life worth living.

For Nietzsche, Greek optimism does not arise from a natural gift for taking life easily and closing one's eyes to the sorrows of mankind. It has a nobler and more beautiful origin. The traditions of the Greeks concerning the primitive epoch, the age of brass, and the period of the Titans, proves that they also know of universal suffering. In support of this thesis, Nietzsche recalls the reply of Silenus, the companion of Dionysos, to King Midas, who had asked him to reveal to him what was best for man: "Race of miserable ephemerals, children of chance and affliction, why wilt thou compel me to say that which will sound but ill unto thine ears? The



happiest destiny, for ever beyond thy reach, is never to have been born; and the next best by far, is to return, as swiftly as may be, to the bourne whence we came." Now, this gift for suffering, for feeling in their highest degree the griefs and terrors of existence, compelled the Greeks to create—that they might be able to live on—the brilliant world of the Olympic gods. The Hellenic gods are the dazzling and triumphant creation of the Apollonian spirit. To escape from the horror of the reality which they had just caught a glimpse of, Greek genius begot a people of gods, a sparkling vision of life as it was worthy to be lived. Greek genius trusted to these gods it had created, in its distress, to react against the encroachment of pessimism. And life once more seemed to it worth living, since it spread itself out upon a universe governed by such beautiful gods. Homer is the marvellous type of the Apollonian Greek, of the artless artist—but what a sought-after and refined artlessness! The Homeric poetry is the song of triumph of Greek civilisation, victorious over the terrors of the epoch of the Titans; it marks the culminating point of the Apollonian illusion by which the artistic Greek was able to dissimulate to himself the ugliness and sadness of real life.

Confronting the Apollonian culture, however, there gradually arose the Dionysian culture, or rather the *tragic* culture.

The Dionysian spirit was widespread in the ancient world. Among the barbarians it brought with it those dreadful orgies in which man returned to the brute state, and gave himself up without restraint to his instincts of voluptuousness and

cruelty. Despite his aversion from anything barbarian, this contagion seized upon the Greek; all the more so because he also felt himself inwardly influenced by the Dionysian spirit. His orgies, however, never became bestial; they were festivals at which nature celebrated her deliverance, and at which man felt himself exalted by the sense of his communion with the universe. From these Dionysian orgies arose Greek tragedy.

It is well known that the origin of Greek tragedy was a chorus of satyrs. The Greeks looked upon satyrs as indestructible spirits of nature which were at the back of all civilisation, and which by their very appearance dispelled the notion of civilisation, threw down the barriers that separated man and nature, and showed that nature was always the same, eternally powerful and fecund despite the unceasing coming and going of generations and peoples. The Greek conceived the satyr as a "nature-being" so to speak, without culture of any kind, but by no means a brute: there was something sublime and divine about him, he was the symbol of man's most potent instincts; he was an enthusiast, exalted by being granted access to the god; he was compassionate and pitiful, for he shared the sufferings of Dionysos; he was initiated into the innermost wisdom of nature, he was the symbol of that all-powerful fecundity of life which the Greek admired with religious veneration. This chorus of satyrs was at the beginning the representative of the entire public, seized with Dionysian intoxication. By dances and music it awoke a sacred enthusiasm in the spectator; it thus led

him to abolish the remembrance of civilisation within himself, and also the remembrance of his own individuality, and to take to himself for the time being the soul of a satyr and share his drunkenness. And when all the choruses sang in unison, a prey to the same sacred frenzy, then in the midst of the enraptured chorus arose the radiant vision of the god Dionysos, which immediately communicated itself to the crowd of spectators. Thus the Dionysian intoxication gave rise to an Apollonian vision, which was nothing but the precise, particular, and plastic translation of the indefinite and "musical" state of mind engendered by this mystic drunkenness.

Greek tragedy, then, is a manifestation of the Dionysian state of mind, translated and "specialised" in some way for the eyes and not for the intelligence by the aid of an Apollonian image. By its essential inspiration it is *musical*, it is the cry of triumph of the will, which feels itself to be immortal in spite of the ever-flowing stream of human things; in its form it is plastic, and takes its substance from Apollonian visions. The only hero of this tragedy is the god Dionysos. At first he is merely a vision of the chorus of satyrs; and tragedy, at the beginning, is also purely lyrical: it is a hymn in honour of the god, by which the chorus communicates its vision to the spectators. Later on this vision is objectised, and represented on the stage so that it may appeal with even greater intensity to the imagination of the spectators: the tragic scene becomes the symbolic image of the frame of clouds, in the midst of which

the divine vision shows itself to the Bacchantes who run to and fro in the valley, intoxicated by the god, and who are represented by the chorus. Still later, Dionysos no longer shows himself in this divine form; but in the varied and plastic forms of heroes in whom he is incarnated, under the tragic mask of an Œdipus or a Prometheus. All these heroes of the old myths of the Homeric epoch are indeed conceived as avatars of the god: "The one truly real Dionysus appears in a multiplicity of forms, in the mask of a fighting hero, and entangled, as it were, in the net of an individual will. As the visibly appearing god now talks and acts, he resembles an erring, striving, suffering individual: and that, in general, he appears with such epic precision and clearness is due to the dream-reading Apollo, who reads to the chorus its Dionysian state through this symbolic appearance. In reality, however, this hero is the suffering Dionysus of the mysteries, a god experiencing in himself the sufferings of individuation, of whom wonderful myths tell that as a boy he was dismembered by the Titans, and has been worshipped in this state as Zagreus: whereby is intimated that this dismemberment, the properly Dionysian suffering, is like a transformation into air, water, earth, and fire, that we must therefore regard the state of individuation as the source and primal cause of all suffering, as something objectionable in itself. From the smile of Dionysus sprang the Olympian gods, from his tears sprang man. In his existence as a dismembered god, Dionysus has the dual nature of a cruel barbarised demon,

and a mild pacific ruler. But the hope of the epopts looked for a new birth of Dionysus, which we have now to conceive of in anticipation as the end of individuation: it was for this coming third Dionysus that the stormy jubilation-hymns of the epopts resounded. And it is only this hope that sheds a ray of joy upon the features of a world torn asunder and shattered into individuals: as is symbolised in the myth by Demeter sunk in eternal sadness, who rejoices again only when told that she may once more give birth to Dionysus." Thus the tragic Greeks revive the Homeric gods in the world, those gods whose radiant brilliancy was already becoming duller; and they make use of all these Apollonian visions as particular and typical symbols by means of which they translate into a perceptible form their conception of the universe. In their hands these plastic myths become pregnant with musical emotion and Dionysian wisdom. Vivified by the breath of the Dionysian spirit and the magical power of music, the old Homeric myth, just before its death, attains its most expressive form: "it rises once more like a wounded hero, and the whole surplus of vitality, together with the philosophical calmness of the Dying, burns in its eyes with a last powerful gleam." \*

This epoch of "tragic wisdom," the highest manifestation of which he perceived in the dramas of Æschylus, and of which he thought he saw the rational expression in the philosophy of Heraclitus,

---

\* *Birth of Tragedy*, sec. 10.

is for Nietzsche the culminating point of Hellenic civilisation. When, sixteen years later, he came to know himself thoroughly, and threw a backward glance at the work of his youth, he singled out as the chief merit of his work the fact that he had been the first to set in the forefront (in his *Birth of Tragedy*) the profound sense of the problem of the Dionysian spirit among the Greeks. "The psychology of the orgiastic state, interpreted as a feeling of life and exuberant strength, where grief itself acts as a *stimulans*, has shown me the path leading to the notion of the tragic feeling so greatly misunderstood by Aristotle, as also by our own pessimists. . . . The affirmation of life carried even into its most formidable problems, the Will to Live exulting in the knowledge of its inexhaustible fecundity, in the presence of the destruction of the finest types of humanity, that is what I call the Dionysian spirit; and it is there that I found the key to the soul of the tragic poet. The tragic soul does not wish to get rid of terror and pity, it does not wish to purify itself from a dangerous passion by means of a violent explosion of this passion—which was what Aristotle understood by it—no: it wishes, far above pity and terror, to be *itself* the eternal joy of the future, the joy which also understands the joy of annihilating. . . ."\*

The Dionysian spirit, however, gave place in Greece to the scientific spirit. Having freed himself from pessimism, either by the contemplation of beauty, or by his cognisance of the eternity of the will,

---

\* *Twilight of the Idols*: What I owe to the ancients.

the Greek had recourse to a third means, to rational knowledge of the universe. Science also is a powerful remedy against pessimism: in the same way as the artist says to life: "Thou art worth living because thy image is beautiful," the scientist says, "I desire thee; for thou art worth knowing." In his scientific discovery he finds the same pleasure as the artist does in his Apollonian vision. From this point of view the scientific illusion is as beneficent as the Apollonian or Dionysian illusion. But it must not be forgotten that the beneficent virtue of science lies in the very act of searching, and not at all in the truth found thereby. Now, the great error into which science almost always falls is that of thinking it can not only know the world, but guide and correct it as well. It ingenuously believes, in its awkward optimism, that the world is intelligible, both in its entirety and in its details, that knowledge is the highest virtue, that ignorance is the source of all evil, and that, with the aid of science, man may reach all virtues, even tragic heroism.

Socrates is the first grandiose type of rationalist in Greece. Reason with him was so powerful that it to some extent took the place of instinct in his life. The normal man is put on guard by his reason against the errors of his instinct: with Socrates the contrary was the case; the instinct—that familiar "demon" whose voice he sometimes heard—warned him of the errors of his logic! Of a less noble character than the Greeks of the tragic epoch, he could nevertheless fascinate his contemporaries by the superiority of his dialectics: he bade adieu to life calmly, without regrets, confirming by his

death his unshaken faith in his ideas and serene optimism.\*

It was the Socratic spirit that killed Greek tragedy. Before the tribunal of the reason, Dionysian tragedy was obliged to yield, precisely because of that irrational, illogical, "musical" element it contained. A tragedy proves nothing, sets forth no useful truth. Even more than this, it is highly immoral; does it not show the destruction of the finest specimens of mankind? Now, if there is, as scientific optimism would have us believe, a necessary connection between science, virtue, and true happiness, moral tragedy is seen to be a dangerous heresy. "Poetic justice" must triumph in works of the mind; the highest form of art becomes, as Socrates wished, the Æsopic fable. Moreover, it was not only tragic art which Socrates condemned; but, in a more general manner, all Hellenic civilisation: he was the incarnation of *reason*, whilst the Greeks obeyed the higher law of *instinct*; they desired life to be powerful and beautiful, he wished it to be logical and self-conscious. We thus come to look upon him as the decided and implacable scorner of the spirit of his time. Alone among his contemporaries, he con-

---

\* Nietzsche became more and more hostile to Socrates as time went on. He saw in him the plebeian and decadent type, presenting as he did a great contrast to the aristocratic Greek of the tragic age, overflowing with vital strength. Socrates' nihilism showed itself at the hour of his death, when he said to Crito: "We owe a cock to Æsculapius": was not this a sign that he looked upon life as an illness? being as a consequence the indication of an actual pessimism, denying its apparent optimism. See the *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 340, and the *Twilight of the Idols*, art. Socrates.



fessed that he "knew nothing"; and, compared with them, he was right. He contemplated all the illustrious men of Athens, politicians or orators, poets or artists; and he perceived that all these men, so self-confident, so fully persuaded of their own abilities, lived and acted really by instinct, and without clearly knowing what they were about. Thus wherever he turned his eyes he saw only illusion, error, foolish self-satisfaction. And in the name of his sovereign reason, conscious that he was the representative of a new civilisation, he condemned the entire Hellenic culture from top to bottom, without suspecting for a moment that the old world which he was casting down was infinitely superior to the new world which he was about to put in its place.

From a purely historical point of view, what is the value of this theory of Nietzsche's on the evolution of Greek civilisation? It would perhaps be inadvisable to think of settling this question just now. It is certain—and Nietzsche himself was well aware of it—that his fashion of mingling philosophy and philology tended to lead him far away from the opinions which prevail to-day among men of science. These positive minds, favouring precise facts, ill disposed to turn their attention to problems insusceptible of scientific solution, will be tempted to condemn Nietzsche's method absolutely, and to reject without consideration numbers of his affirmations which are in complete contradiction to one's ordinary conception of what the Greeks were. If he must some day occupy a place in the history of philology, it can only be as an initiator, as a man who throws out suggestive ideas which practical men

who follow him will have to verify or rectify; if the "Dionysian problem," as he has propounded it, is ever solved in a manner approaching his own solution, he will undoubtedly be entitled to the gratitude and esteem of those philologists who have so sternly repudiated him. The future will decide on whose side truth lies. It must, however, be added that, even if Nietzsche's ideas were without objective value for a knowledge of the Greek soul, they would nevertheless possess an interest of the first order for the history of Nietzsche's thought. "I am far from believing," he says somewhere, "that I fully understood Schopenhauer; but through Schopenhauer I learnt to know myself a little better."\* It might in the same way be said: It is not certain that Nietzsche ever understood the Greeks; it is not even certain whether it would be useful, or possible, to know what the Greeks were in *reality*; indeed, may it not be that one's conception of classical antiquity is only "the marvellous flower born of the ardent aspiration of the Teuton for the south"?† On the other hand, however, it is certain that the study of Greek antiquity gave birth in Nietzsche's mind to the notion of the Dionysian spirit and of tragic culture: now, this notion of the will exalting itself to the idea of its eternity before the sight of human suffering and death, corresponds to one of the deepest feelings of Nietzsche's soul; and will form the turning-point of all his philosophy. Whatever may be the intrinsic value of *The Birth of Tragedy*, it will thus always

---

\* *Einzelne Gedanken über Schopenhauer.*

† *Homer and Classical Philology*, ad init.

have the merit of showing us how, by coming into contact with Hellenic civilisation, Nietzsche came to know himself.

## 3.

To define the attitude taken up by Nietzsche during the first part of his life as a thinker, relatively to contemporary civilisation, we may say, using formulæ the sense of which we have just clearly defined, that he was a tragic philosopher living in the midst of a Socratic civilisation.

Nietzsche conceives the life of man as a heroic battle against all error and illusion. He looks out upon the world with the eyes of a pessimist: nature appears to him to be a terrible and often maleficent force; history seems to him "brutal and senseless." He haughtily forbids himself to yield to the seductions of vulgar optimism; he refuses to become a party to the illusions by which men seek to persuade themselves that all is for the best in this best of all worlds; above all he refuses to believe that life can ever afford us a moment of true gladness; and he will not let himself be deceived by the deceitful appearances of happiness which deceive the masses. The mission of the higher man is then, according to him, to give no quarter to whatever is bad, to dispel all errors, to denounce all false and overrated values, and to show himself pitiless towards all the weaknesses, all the meanness, all the lying of civilisation. "I dream," he writes, "of an association of men who will be entire and absolute, who will pay no regard to their conduct or discretion, and will call themselves 'destroyers'; they will submit every-

thing to their criticism, and will sacrifice themselves to truth. Whatever is bad and false must be brought into the light of day! We will not construct before the proper time; we do not know whether we can ever build, or whether it would be better never to build at all. There are lazy pessimists, resigned ones—we shall never be of their number.”\* The ideal he holds up for our admiration and imitation is “man according to Schopenhauer,” the man who knows that true happiness is impossible, who hates and despises the vulgar worldly prosperity aimed at by the average man, who destroys everything that merits destruction, heedless of his own suffering, heedless also of the suffering he causes to those around him, borne up in his painful journey through life by his resolute will to be true and sincere at all costs.† Instead of stopping like Schopenhauer, however, at the negation of the will to live, Nietzsche admires and reveres, as a Dionysian Greek, that Will which eternally wills life and legitimises it in every possible way. He is a pessimist; but his pessimism leads him not to the necessity of resignation, but to the necessity of heroism; he looks upon asceticism not as an ideal, but as a symptom of fatigue, of degeneration. “Pessimism,” he affirms at this time, “is impossible practically, and cannot be logical. Non-existence cannot be the aim.”‡ Consequently instead of preaching, like the pessimists, separation from life,

---

\* *Die Ideale der Zukunft*, sec. 8.

† *Schopenhauer as Educator*, sec. 4.

‡ *Sokrates und der Instinkt*, sec. 7.

the aspiration for *Nirvana*, he considers as "good" everything that tends to strengthen man's will to live, everything that adds an aim or an interest to life, everything that renders it more worthy of being lived.

Like the Greeks of the tragic period, Nietzsche is strongly individualistic and aristocratic. What he especially admires in Hellenic civilisation is the fact that it produced a large number of superior men. Now, this is, in his opinion, the true aim of life. The tragic hero, the man according to Schopenhauer, is not only the highest and noblest form of existence; he is the justification of existence. Like Flaubert or Renan, Nietzsche admits that a people is a roundabout path taken by nature to produce a dozen great men, and he lays down the principle that "humanity must always act so as to bring men of genius into the world—this is its task; it has no other."\* Youth must therefore always be taught to respect genius. The young will be told that they have but one single duty: "to hasten the birth and the development of the philosopher, the artist, and the saint within us and without us, and thus to collaborate in attaining the supreme perfection of nature." The young man will be taught to consider himself as a defective work of nature, but at the same time to honour the artistic genius and admirable designs of that tireless worker, and to give all the aid he can to fulfilling the task of humanity so that her intentions may be better realised another time. He will understand that

---

\* *Schopenhauer as Educator*, sec. 6.

self-knowledge, and consequently self-discontent, form the basis of all culture; he will say: "I see above me something higher, more human than I am myself; let all help me to attain that ideal, as I myself will come to the help of all who think and will suffer like me: and all this so that one day the man who feels himself perfect in knowledge and love, may be born again by contemplation and creative power; the man who, in the fulness of his being, lives on the breast of nature, who is the judge and standard of all things." Henceforth we must never leave to mere chance the task of raising the man of genius from amidst the crowd of mediocrities; with the full knowledge of what they are doing, men should endeavour to engender, by selection and suitable training, a race of heroes: "it is possible," says Nietzsche, "to obtain by means of ingenious devices types of great men different from and more powerful than those who, up to the present, have been formed by fortuitous circumstances. The rational culture of the higher man: this is a perspective full of promise." \*

Nietzsche does not quail before any of the consequences of his doctrines, even the most severe and cruel. He knows that the production of all aristocracies requires an army of slaves, and he says so bluntly. "Slavery is one of the essential conditions of a high culture: this is, it must be said, a truth which leaves room for no illusion as to the absolute value of existence. That is the vulture which devours the liver of the modern Prometheus, the

---

\* *Die Ideale der Zukunft*, sec. 3.

champion of civilisation. The misery of the men who struggle painfully through life must be increased to allow a small number of Olympic geniuses to produce great works of art.\* It follows that the progress of civilisation by no means tends to ease the lot of the lowly. The workmen of the nineteenth century are no happier than the slaves in the time of Pericles; and if to our scientific and optimistic civilisation there succeeded a period of "tragic" culture of the kind Nietzsche desires, the fate of the workers and labourers would not be one whit more enviable. Instead of being exploited by a class of capitalists utterly lacking any kind of nobility and greatness, they would simply be supporting a small, though glorious and magnificent, circle of geniuses; but they would be slaves just as before. The "tragic" man, then, has against him not only the resentment and hatred of the oppressed, of the pariahs of civilisation; but an even more dangerous enemy to conquer: pity, which rends his heart, and incites him, if he listens to it, to sacrifice civilisation to the material happiness of humanity. At this point he comes into contact with the inexorable law that governs the world: he who would live—or rather who is condemned to live in a world governed by suffering and death—must also comprehend within himself that inner and painful contradiction which is the very essence of all life, of all growth. "Each instant consumes the preceding one; every birth is the death of innumerable beings; to beget, to

---

\* *Der Genius*, sec. 2.

live, and to murder are all one. And that is why we may compare a triumphant civilisation to a conqueror dripping with blood, who drags at the end of his triumphal procession a crowd of vanquished beings and slaves, chained to his chariot." \*

We must then, concludes Nietzsche, if we wish to be frank with ourselves, give up all optimistic illusions on this point. The European of the present day who, in his artless rationalism, fancies that science leads to happiness, and that the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the final end of all civilisation, attempts to deny the misery of the people of slaves which is the *sine qua non* of modern society, he would deceive the galley-slaves of work as to their real condition by extolling the "dignity of labour," and gloss over the bankruptcy of science by declaring that it is more honourable to earn one's bread by the sweat of one's brow than to live in idleness. A poor sophism, this, and one which no more deceives anybody to-day—neither the proletariats, who are socialists; nor the rich, who no longer have any faith in their sole right to enjoyment. Let us then frankly acknowledge that slavery is the shameful and lamentable reverse side of all civilisation. We may mitigate it, make it less painful; we may render it easy for the serf to accept his fate—from this point of view the middle ages, with their feudal organisation, had a great advantage over modern times. But so long as society exists, there will also exist powerful and privileged men who will found their splendour upon the misery of

---

\* Preliminary notes to *The Birth of Tragedy*.



a multitude of creatures oppressed and exploited for their benefit.

By his instincts, theories, and hopes, Nietzsche found that he was quite in opposition to the prevailing tendencies of his time. Contemporary civilisation, in fact, is essentially "Socratic." The upholder of "modern ideas" is naïvely and resolutely rationalistic; he believes in science and its civilising mission; he is certain that it cannot fail to lead man to happiness, and he looks upon general happiness, in the midst of a well-organised society, as the ideal towards which humanity is tending. Now, Nietzsche with his aristocratic instincts and "tragic" convictions feels himself inwardly in disagreement with his contemporaries, and in particular with his German countrymen. Following the establishment of the new Empire, when the German armies had conquered to the cry of "God with us!" he proclaimed his deep aversion for Christianity. When every German, following Hegel, believed that the State is the justification of the individual, he exalted the individual, and showed himself to be very sceptical as to the importance of the rôle played by the State from the point of view of civilisation. When the cry was everywhere taken up that the real victor of Sadowa and Sedan was the German schoolmaster, and that Teutonic culture had vanquished French culture, he affirmed that there was no Teutonic culture, whilst the French really had a national culture; that the Germans, having been and continuing to be "barbarians," were entirely mistaken in thinking themselves to be civilised; and that the victories

of 1870, confirming them in this delusion, might turn out a disaster for the victors, and "kill the German spirit for the benefit of the German Empire." When Teutonic chauvinism was at its height, his own inner mind remained indifferent to any patriotic exaltation; while the thunder of the battle of Wörth resounded far and wide over Europe, he meditated in a quiet Alpine valley on the problem of the Greek mind; a little later, under the walls of Metz, it was still the art and life of the Greeks that occupied his thoughts; and at last, when the treaty of peace was signed, he put forth the idea that the era of nationalities was drawing to its close, that we were coming into a period of "European" culture, and that a free spirit should be able to raise itself above the fortuitous antipathies which divided peoples from one another: "It is, so to speak, such *small statery* to let one's self be bound down by modes of thinking and seeing which some thousands of miles further on have no effect on any one! Orient and Occident are merely chalk-marks which people draw before our very eyes in order to exploit our timidity. I will try to become free, says the young spirit to itself; and it must forsooth let its course be stopped because two nations happen to hate each other and wage war, because an ocean divides two continents, or because all around it a religion is taught and believed in which did not exist two thousand years before!"\* Nietzsche clearly saw that his method of thinking and feeling clashed with the prejudices

---

\* *Schopenhauer as Educator*, I.

of his time; he felt himself to be "out of season" (*unzeitgemäss*) if we may use an expression of his own which he invented about this period; he perceived that he could find no pleasure in those things about which his fellow-countrymen waxed so enthusiastic; and that on the other hand the enterprises which in his eyes were of the very first order for the advancement of European culture—for example, the great project of Richard Wagner to build a model theatre at Bayreuth—did not excite the least interest in them. So in 1872, when he thought, with Wagner and all his friends, that the Bayreuth proposal was on the point of collapsing owing to the apathy of the public, he felt an irresistible desire to declare war with his contemporaries publicly, to cry aloud to them the expression of his aversion and contempt. This was the origin of his *Thoughts out of Season*.\*

The first of these *Thoughts* is directed against the celebrated critic, David Strauss, and also against the book in which he summarised his opinions on religion and civilisation, *The Old Faith and the New*, and in particular against the second part of this book, where the author states his ideal of future society. In reality, Nietzsche did not so much attack the person and work of Strauss as the crowd of his admirers, who saw in the profession of faith

---

\* Besides the four *Thoughts* published between 1873 and 1876, Nietzsche planned many others, which were either not finished or incorporated in *Human, All-too-Human*. One of them, *We Philologists*, was written out at some length, and contains the germs of many ideas developed later in *Zarathustra*.

of this old man eloquent the last word on the spirit of progress. The enemy whom he takes to task is the Philistine—not the Philistine who is ashamed to be such, or the *gemüthlich* and good-natured Philistine; but the self-satisfied Philistine, who prides himself upon his culture, the *Bildungsphilister*, as he calls him, whose perfected type he sees in Strauss. This Philistine carries on honourably a useful trade; he is a public official, a soldier, or a merchant; but he is nevertheless pleased to take an interest in all great contemporary questions, to keep in touch with the latest advancements of science, to know the history of the past, to be enthusiastic over the renaissance of the German Empire, to be edified by the writings of the best authors, or by hearing the masterpieces of German music. Strauss does not believe in the Christian's paradise, nor even in the existence of God, but never mind: although an atheist, he is none the less the finest fellow in the world. He takes care not to tell his faithful followers that the world is an implacable piece of machinery, and that man has only to keep a sharp look-out not to let himself be caught in any of its wheels; he teaches, on the contrary, that "Necessity, or in other words the connection between causes and effects in the universe, is Reason itself," which amounts to deifying reality and adoring success. In morals likewise he brings forward no dangerous innovation; he will not dare, for instance, frankly to recommend the individual to develop all his faculties freely, to be "himself" without restrictions and without remorse; but he will add, after having admitted the natural

inequality of men, a phrase which allows of his re-establishing all the precepts of traditional morals: "Never forget that others are men, too; that is to say that, in spite of individual differences, they are identical with you; and that they have the same wants, the same needs, as you." Above all—and it is this that irritates Nietzsche to the greatest extent—Strauss shares the distrust of Philistines for men of genius: he considers as "unwholesome" everything that passes beyond the modest sphere of his understanding: he declares that the ninth symphony of Beethoven can only please those who "look upon the irregular and rough as a sign of genius, and take the shapeless for the sublime," he thinks he can refute Schopenhauer, whom he detests, by his gracious bantering: if the world is bad, the thought that thinks so is bad also, hence the pessimist is a bad thinker—hence the world is good! It follows that, for Nietzsche, Strauss is the type of pretentious mediocrity who affirms his higher claim to existence; he is a timid thinker who always stops half-way, and dare not go to the very end of his ideas; he is an optimist who basely closes his eyes to the necessary sufferings of humanity; he is a Philistine who declares that the duty of all men is to live as Philistines, and who, instead of furthering the development of genial individualities, disputes their right to live once they have raised themselves above ordinary mediocrity.

In the second *Thought*, Nietzsche does not attack a man, or a class of men, but what he regards as a dangerous abuse of modern culture: the misuse of historical studies. History is a beneficent factor

of all civilisation so long as it remains in the service of life and teaches us how to live better. *Monumental* history leads a man of action into the presence of immortal works of the past, and stimulates him in his creative activity by inciting him to become worthy of the great men of former times, to continue their glorious tradition, to live, not for the vulgar and mediocre happiness of the present age, but to carry further and higher the ideal of humanity. *Traditional* history, which teaches love and respect for dead and far-off things, is of inestimable value for men and peoples not over-favoured by circumstances, or who live amidst disagreeable surroundings: for such people it embellishes the present with the aid of the past, and diffuses over their modest or difficult, obscure or dangerous existence, a perfume of sweet and consoling poetry. Finally, critical history, which summons the past to the bar of reason, examines it minutely, and finally condemns it—for everything that exists deserves to disappear, and is hence to be condemned—is a precious weapon for those who are oppressed by the weight of the past, and who must free themselves from it that they may continue to live. But history becomes a terrible and evil power when it sets up for a science independent of life, when it claims an absolute value for itself, and takes as its motto: *fiat veritas, pereat vita*. Instead of being a principle of life, it then becomes a principle of death. It fills the mind of man with a store of barren knowledge, which turns him into an encyclopædic dictionary instead of inciting him to action; more than this, it retards the development of his person-

ality ; it arouses in him the depressing feeling that he is a mere epigone, a late arrival, only capable of learning history ; but no longer able to *make* it himself. Nevertheless, answer the apologists of historical culture, history, while lacking in other recommendations, has at least that of teaching us how to judge men and things with objective equity. That is nothing, answers Nietzsche : in reality the adjective "objective" is applied to the historian who judges the past by taking as a standard for his appreciations the prejudices of his own time ; and "subjective" to the man who withdraws himself from prevailing ideas ; so it is of no use for the historian to be "impartial," or, in other words, to consider himself as a disinterested spectator of the problem he is studying—quite the contrary : the only man who is entitled to write history is he who works best at building up : "The man of experience, the higher man, alone writes history. The man who, throughout his whole existence, cannot recall moments when he felt himself to be more sublime than any one else, will never be able to divine what was sublime and great in former times. The spirit of past centuries is always the decree of an oracle : you can only understand it if you are the architects of the future, the 'seers' of the present." \* One last sad consequence of the excessive development of the historical sense is that it favours the most revolting form of optimism, respect for the brutal fact : the worship of success. The historian thinks he sees in "universal evolu-

---

\* *Use and Abuse of History*, sec. 6.

tion" the traces of some kind of higher reason; he racks his brains to find out where this evolution began, and where it must end. Now, man has never been great but in the extent he has been able to revolt against necessity, to battle against blind and foolish chance,—in short, to the extent he has succeeded in being *himself*; thus true history is not that of the masses, but that of men of genius: "The time will come when we shall wisely keep away from all constructions of the world-process, or even of the history of man; a time when we shall no more look at masses but at individuals, who form a sort of bridge over the wan stream of becoming. They may not perhaps continue a process, but they live out of time as contemporaries: and thanks to history that permits such a company, they live as the Republic of geniuses of which Schopenhauer speaks. One giant calls to the other across the waste spaces of time, and the high spirit-talk goes on, undisturbed by the wanton, noisy dwarfs who creep in among them. The task of history is to be the mediator between these, and even to give the motive and power to produce the great man. The aim of mankind can lie ultimately only in its highest examples." \*

## 4.

In his *Thoughts out of Season*, however, Nietzsche does not rest content with fighting against the tendencies of the present epoch, which he thinks blam-

---

\* *Use and Abuse of History*, sec. 9.



able or dangerous : he begins, at the same time, to work at building up the future. He seeks in contemporary civilisation for the preliminary signs of a change of view, for a reform of public spirit, for the renaissance of the Dionysian spirit : he looks for modern men of genius worthy of guiding youth towards a new aim, capable of snatching it from enervating optimism, and from the depressing cult of material prosperity ; in short, he seeks educators for himself who will help him to see clearly into himself, who will reveal to him what he is, whither he goes. These masters and educators Nietzsche at first thought he had found in Schopenhauer and Wagner.

He was initiated into Schopenhauer's philosophy towards the end of 1865, when he was studying philology at Leipzig. It happened that he bought *The World as Will and Idea* at the shop of the bookseller Rohn.\* At the first perusal he was overwhelmed by the magnificent prospects opened out to him by this book, and even more so by the personality of the philosopher himself whom he perceived behind the book. "I am one of those readers of Schopenhauer," he said later on, "who know for certain, after they have read a page of him, that they will read his book from the first line to the last, and that they will listen with rapt attention to every word that falls from his lips. My confidence in him was instantly full and entire : after nine months have passed, it is still the same."†

---

\* *Leben*, i. 231.

† *Schopenhauer as Educator*, sec. 2.

He admitted provisionally, at least, and without prejudice to what he might think later on—his chief hypotheses. We have seen that, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche bases his exposition on the theories advanced by Schopenhauer on the will as “thing-in-itself,” on the world as “idea,” on individuation as the cause of all suffering, and on music as the direct expression of the will. In the same work he hails Schopenhauer as the Messiah of a tragic culture destined to replace the “Socratic” culture of modern times, the characteristic trait of which new culture is the following: “Instead of Science, it is henceforth Wisdom which is our highest aim—Wisdom, who, without letting herself be deceived by scientific mirages, fixes her look on the entire image of the world, and endeavours, in an impulse of sympathy and love, to conceive of universal suffering as suffering proper to herself.”\* In 1872, we find the same idea expressed in a short article on *The Relationship between Schopenhauer's Philosophy and German Culture*, which contains the seeds of the essential ideas in the three first *Thoughts*. Finally in 1874, in the third “Thought,” *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche professes his deep gratitude for the thinker who initiated him into the life of the spirit, and shows the beneficial influence that the ideas of the great pessimist can exercise upon modern minds. The man of to-day, he says, is seeking himself: now, to find out what his real nature is, his true ego, nothing can be more useful than a master—not a

---

\* *Birth of Tragedy*, sec. 18.

master who directs him to follow such-and-such a path, or supplies him with more extensive means of action; but an educator who will deliver him from everything that prevents him from penetrating as far as this hidden and obscure ego, and who lies concealed in every one of us. Such a master Nietzsche found in Schopenhauer. He saw in him, at the first glance, a philosopher of an entire intellectual loyalty, of perfect sincerity in all his writings: "Schopenhauer's speeches are to himself alone, or, if you wish to imagine an auditor, let it be a son whom the father is instructing. It is a rough, honest, good-humoured talk to one who 'hears and loves.' Such writers are rare. His strength and sanity surround us at the first sound of his voice; it is like entering the heights of the forest, where we breathe deep and are well again. We feel a bracing air everywhere, a certain candour and naturalness of his own, that belongs to men who are at home with themselves, and masters of a very rich home indeed." \*

It was in the school of Schopenhauer that Nietzsche learned to see reality such as it is, with all its ugliness, and all the sufferings it brings with it. He also learnt that the genius must fight against his own age if he would arrive at the full knowledge of himself; that when he fights the prejudices, the weaknesses, the vices, of his contemporaries, it is really his own individuality which he is purifying by eliminating all foreign elements and parasites which have come to him from outward

---

\* *Schopenhauer as Educator*, sec. 2.

sources, by sifting the pure gold of his genius from the dross and alloy mixed with it. And above all, Nietzsche finds in Schopenhauer this definition of tragic life as he conceives it himself: "A happy life is impossible: the most beautiful thing man can realise is a *heroic existence*: an existence in which, after having given himself up to a cause from which some general good may result, and having overcome innumerable difficulties, he finally rests a conqueror; but is only recompensed badly, or even not at all. Then, at the end of all, like the prince in Gozzi's *Re corvo*, he is left petrified, but in a noble attitude, and full of grandeur. His memory lives, and he is celebrated as a hero; his will deadened, his life surviving through severe ordeals and difficulties, through ill-fortune and the ingratitude of the world, is at length extinguished in *Nirvana*."\* Nietzsche thought he had discovered in Schopenhauer the modern philosophical expression of that Dionysian wisdom which he so much admired in the Greeks.

And as it fell to Schopenhauer's lot to recognise genius, not only within himself but also without himself, and to be able to admire, in the person of Goethe, one of the most marvellous examples of a free and strong man, so Nietzsche also had the good fortune to be intimately acquainted with one of the most potent geniuses of modern times: Richard Wagner.

Nietzsche's admiration for Wagner may be traced back to the years of his youth. Having, until the

---

\* *Schopenhauer as Educator*, sec. 4.

age of fifteen, been an uncompromising classicist, an exclusive admirer of Mozart and Haydn, Schubert and Mendelssohn, Beethoven and Bach, and a decided scorner of what he called "the music of the future of a Liszt or a Berlioz," he nevertheless finished by learning to enjoy the works of Wagner; and his admiration turned into enthusiasm when he heard *Tristan and Iseult*. In 1868 he was introduced to Wagner when the master was staying with the Brockhaus's at Leipzig. In the following year, as we have already stated, he became one of Wagner's intimate friends, and went to see him frequently at his hermitage at Tribschen. "During some years we lived in common, both as regards little things and great things," wrote Nietzsche in 1888; "on both sides there was unlimited confidence."\*

About the beginning of 1872, after the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, the friendship of the young philosopher for the great artist reached its highest point. "I have made an alliance with Wagner," he wrote to a friend of his at this time, "you can scarcely imagine how friendly we are; and how our projects harmonise."† In his desire to prove his attachment by acts as well as words, he was actually on the point of interrupting his career as professor at the beginning of this very year in order that he might take part in a series of lectures

---

\* Brandes, *Menschen und Werke*, art. Nietzsche.

† *Leben*, ii. pt. i. 203. This work of Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche must be consulted for full details of Nietzsche's friendship with Wagner, and especially i. 72, 74, 135, 277, 288; ii. 1, 13, 201.

for the benefit of the work at Bayreuth. The departure of Wagner for Bayreuth (April 1872) made no change in his relations with Nietzsche, who went to see him several times at his new home, and, in particular, was present at a dinner given in honour of Wagner on May 22nd, 1872, when he laid the foundation-stone of the Wagner theatre. In July 1876 he went to Bayreuth on the pressing invitation of the master, to hear the rehearsals of the *Tetralogy*, and to be present at the final triumph of the great work of dramatic art reform undertaken by Wagner. A few days before his arrival Nietzsche sent to his friends a copy of his fourth "*Thought*," *Richard Wagner at Bayreuth*, a clear and penetrating analysis of Wagner's artistic and moral personality, and an enthusiastic apology of the great work of reform which he had carried out. He defined Wagner as a modern Æschylus, in whom "tragic" wisdom was expressed, not, as in the case of Schopenhauer, in a philosophical form, but in the living and concrete form of incomparable works of art. He saw in him a "Dionysian" genius, who, not being able to express by the mere language of words the huge sea of feelings that surged within him, had become a "dithyrambic dramatist," and had united every special art in a prodigious synthesis—the art of the actor, the musician, and the poet—to communicate what he felt to the rest of the world: "The artistic genius," wrote Nietzsche, "when he has reached his entire development, his full maturity, is a completed work, without hiatus or imperfection: he is a truly free artist, who cannot do otherwise than think simultaneously in every

special branch of art ; he is the mediator who reconciles the two apparently opposed worlds of music and poetry ; he restores the unity, the completeness, of our artistic faculty, a unity which can neither be divined by the intelligence nor deduced by reasoning ; but which must be shown by deeds."\* Wagner's great work, the creation of a musical drama in which Greek tragedy lives once more, and the realisation of this drama at Bayreuth, is an event of the first rank in European culture. It tends to nothing less than a renaissance of Greek culture in the modern world : it may be said, indeed, that everything remains the same as civilisation advances, and it is not possible seriously and sincerely to reform the art of the theatre without at the same time giving rise to great innovations in morals, education, and politics. The triumph of the work done at Bayreuth, if it be final and lasting, may be hailed as the dawn of a new era for humanity.

Some weeks after having written his apology for Wagner, Nietzsche left Bayreuth, wholly disenchanted, weary and sad to the last degree : the most beautiful dream of his youth had been suddenly dispelled ; his enthusiasm for Wagner had evaporated. How had such a state of things come about ?

## 5.

Nietzsche tells us in one of his prefaces that the greater number of his writings express, not the feelings he experienced at the time he wrote them

---

\* *Richard Wagner at Bayreuth*, sec. 3.

down, but feelings already *lived*, which had given place, in him, to new ideas. This is why *Schopenhauer as Educator* is dated at a time when he no longer believed either in pessimism or in Schopenhauer. It is thus, likewise, that *Richard Wagner at Bayreuth* was, at bottom, "an acknowledgment of gratitude rendered to a moment of my past, to the most beautiful period of 'calm sea'—and the most dangerous, also, of my existence. . . . it was in reality a rupture, a farewell."\* Documents published not long ago, which enable us to follow, even in the minutest details, the genesis of Nietzsche's thought, not only confirm this statement of his, but prove unanswerably that at the very time when, in those writings which he prepared for publication, he took care not to let a word escape him which was not in praise of either Schopenhauer or Wagner, his thought, far from submitting itself unreservedly to the authority of these two masters, was working actively to free itself from their control. We see that, from the very first beginning, he differed from Schopenhauer on some essential points of doctrine. From 1867 onwards he expresses some doubts on the fundamental hypotheses of his entire system, on the attributes which Schopenhauer recognises in the Will, on the Will admitted as essence of the world, even on the existence of a "thing-in-itself."† Very early, too, he brushes aside categorically the pessimistic conclusions of Schopenhauer's system; he will have neither philosophical resignation nor

---

\* *Human, All-too-Human*, ii., Pref. sec. 1.

† *Leben*, i. 343.



nihilism ; his scepticism even goes as far as to meditate "On Truth and Lying considered from an extra-moral standpoint," and as a result of his reflections he condemns the philosophy of "disheartened wisdom" which demands truth at all costs, sacrificing even the very existence of humanity to science ; and extols "tragic wisdom," which, having denied all metaphysics, "places the understanding in the service of the most beautiful form of life," restores to art those rights which science would take away from it, and concludes in man's necessity for "willing illusion." \* On Wagner his judgment is no less free. In 1866 he finds that, in the *Walküre*, serious defects must be weighed against marvellous beauties.† In the course of his preliminary studies in connection with *The Birth of Tragedy*, he outlines, to explain the intervention of the choir in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, a theory which absolutely contradicts that of Wagner;‡ on another occasion he opposes to the Wagnerian conception of musical drama a radically different conception ; he would have the singer descend into the orchestra so as to have nothing on the stage but the scene represented ; the human voices and the orchestra would simply act as commentaries upon this scene on the stage, which would be, as in primitive tragedy, the scenic realisation of an Apollonian vision of the choir seized by the Dionysian spirit. Nietzsche's doubts grew stronger

---

\* See various fragmentary essays on "Truth and Lying," "The Philosopher," etc.

† Preliminary notes for *The Birth of Tragedy*, sec. 8.

‡ *Ibid.* sec. 17.

and stronger at the time when he was working at *Richard Wagner at Bayreuth*; we find in his fragments a number of ideas which were later developed into *The Case of Wagner*.\* He notes what is *immoderate* in Wagner's character and gifts, he finds that Bach and Beethoven show us "a purer nature," he passes severe judgments upon Wagner's political life, on his relations with the revolutionaries or with the king of Bavaria, on his anti-Semitism; he has significant doubts as to Wagner's value, not as an "integral" artist, but as a specialist, *i.e.* as musician, poet, dramatist, and even thinker; he discerns in him certain "reactionary elements": sympathy for the Middle Ages and for Christianity, Buddhistic tendencies, love of the marvellous, German patriotism; he is sceptical as to the real influence Wagner can exercise in Germany. In short, Nietzsche, whilst affirming that he is grateful to Wagner's music "for the purest happiness I have ever enjoyed," shows plainly that he is a heretic in the matter of Wagnerism at the very time when, in public, he covered Wagner with laurels. How can this apparent duplicity be explained?

Nietzsche himself gives us the key to his conduct: "At first we believe a philosopher," he remarks in regard to his relations with Schopenhauer. "Then we say, if he errs in his manner of proving his statements, these statements are true nevertheless. Finally we conclude: his statements themselves are of indifferent value; but this man's *nature* is worth a hundred systems. As a teacher he may

---

\* See *Various Thoughts on Wagner*.

be wrong a thousand times: but his personality itself is always right: and it is that we should pay attention to. There is in a philosopher something that will never be in a philosophy: the cause of many philosophies, genius." \* This aphorism, paradoxical in appearance, well explains the evolution of Nietzsche's feelings in regard to Wagner and Schopenhauer. He began by becoming enamoured with their works, then his love and respect were directed to the personalities of the authors: he loved them as men and as geniuses independently of their works and, as a consequence, took particular care to avoid doing anything likely to interrupt the friendship he felt for them; in particular, he refrained from publicly criticising those passages in their works which did not please him. Finally, the moment came when he perceived that the differences which separated him from his masters were too great for him to be silent without exhibiting a want of sincerity towards himself; and, with his heart broken, he obeyed the imperious exigencies of his conscience as a thinker: he turned his criticism against his educators. He then saw that he had regarded them in a mistaken light. What he had sought for in them was not to understand them as they really were, but to understand himself by coming into touch with them. And this manner of acting had yielded a result paradoxical in appearance, but in reality perfectly logical: instead of his making himself like Schopenhauer or Wagner, he had transformed them on the contrary to his own

---

\* *Nachträge über Schopenhauer,*

likeness. His portrait of Schopenhauer gives us but a faint resemblance of the real Schopenhauer ; but, on the other hand, it describes with great precision the ideal of the "tragic philosopher" as he, Nietzsche, conceived him. In his portrait of Wagner, and his apology for the "thought of Bayreuth," he again wanders away from objective reality to outline the ideal figure of the "Dionysian" artist—a kind of preliminary Zarathustra—and to describe beforehand that "hour of noon," of which he was to speak later in *Zarathustra*, where the assembled elect dedicate themselves to the most sublime task. Instead of painting his models, Nietzsche described his own inward dream.\*

He now saw that a great difference separated him from Schopenhauer, as also from Wagner. At first he had accepted pessimism as a weapon against scientific optimism. The pessimistic criticism of the universe appeared to him to be the imperious duty to be done by every sincere man. On the other hand, he had never accepted without some reserve the "nihilistic" consequences which Schopenhauer drew from his premises : pity raised to a supreme virtue, the annihilation of the will to live proclaimed to be the final aim of existence. As, however, he was absorbed at this time in his battle against the "Socratic" culture of his age, he did not take time to refute these nihilistic tendencies, or the Christian asceticism. He gradually came to perceive, however, that the nihilistic danger was at least as great as

---

\* See a passage from the *Ecce Homo*, quoted by Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche, *Leben*, ii. pt. i. 166 and 259.

the optimistic danger, and that if the nineteenth century saw the flourishing of the mediocre and self-satisfied Philistine, it would be above all a century of *decadence*, tired of living, tired of suffering, aspiring to peace, to nothingness. A new problem then appeared to Nietzsche, a problem which never ceased to occupy his mind until the end of his conscient life: what does this modern *decadence* consist of? What are the symptoms which characterise it, the signs that reveal it? What is the depth and breadth of the nihilistic evil? How can it be cured? As soon as the matter appeared to him in this light, his judgment on Wagner and Schopenhauer was modified from top to bottom. His former allies in the war against optimism became his enemies in the war against nihilism—all the more dangerous enemies because they had exercised on him, and continued to exercise generally on his contemporaries, a very great fascination. He suddenly came to perceive that his passionate friendship for his two educators had been a grave danger for him. If he had not shaken off their influence in time, he would never have been quite himself, he would never have arrived at the full knowledge of his philosophy of the "Superman," the germs of which were already seen in the notion of Dionysian wisdom as he had outlined it in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

From yet another standpoint Nietzsche had been deceived in his cult of Wagner. Loving "beautiful form" as he did, admiring the great classic style in Greece and France, he might have allowed himself to be seduced and misled by the over-rich and over-charged style of the Wagnerian drama. He had

been taken in by the wiles of a "comedian" of genius, a prodigious magician. He had looked upon Wagner as a primitive, spontaneous genius, of an elementary power and unlimited gifts, instead of which he was an ultra-refined decadent, one of those late-comers who, in the twilight of periods of high culture, can employ, with marvellous art, all the resources accumulated by former ages, and produce rare and curious, skilful and complex works, of magnificent and glittering colouring like that of an autumn landscape or a sunset; works, however, which are extraordinary rather than truly beautiful, which lack true nobleness, and also that simple perfection, triumphant and sure of itself. The Wagnerian drama represents, in Nietzsche's opinion, the "flamboyant" style in music; it is the artistic expression suited to our epoch of decadence. Wagner had explored the innermost passages in the labyrinth of the modern soul; he is thus a precious guide for the thinker who would know this soul in its most hidden depths. It is necessary to have been a Wagnerian. . . . But one must learn to free one's self from the control of this great magician: it is a question of life or death. "The greatest event in my life was a recovery," says Nietzsche later; "Wagner was only one of my diseases." \*

It goes without saying that the victims of Nietzsche's criticism knew nothing of that subterranean evolution of his ideas, or of the subtle and delicate motives which guided his behaviour.

---

\* *The Case of Wagner*, Preface.

Schopenhauer, who was dead, could not protest. But Wagner, who was living, and moreover living well, saw in the falling-off of his disciple an actual breach of faith; treason. Nietzsche's deep sadness at the Bayreuth festivities, when he perceived only too clearly the difference—of which he had had some foreboding—between the Wagner of his dreams and the real Wagner—had not escaped the notice of the master, and hurt his feelings exceedingly. When, two years afterwards, Nietzsche gave his *Human, All-too-Human*, to the world (1878), thus showing the new trend his thoughts had taken, and criticised with infinite discretion the Wagnerian drama—Wagner himself never being mentioned by name—the rupture between master and disciple was complete. If Wagner had a sincere liking for Nietzsche, he looked upon him also to some extent as an instrument of his work; and he thought it only right and natural that Nietzsche should limit his ambitions to becoming the first apostle of Wagnerism. His falling-off consequently caused him as much irritation as pain: he saw in Nietzsche an ambitious man who, having begun to make a reputation under his patronage, left him without any other reason than that of drawing attention to his own person, an ingrate who sacrificed an old friendship for an unhealthy need of self-advertisement. Nietzsche, on his part, whilst keenly suffering from the rupture of his relations with Wagner, saw in the resentment of his master an indication of meanness of character and narrowness of mind. And if in his innermost heart, in spite of the divergence of their opinions, he entertained a sincere

affection for the private man, he did not see why any consideration should be paid to the public man whose ideas he combated ; and he did not hesitate, some years later, to discharge against his former friend those passionate pamphlets which showed such considerable resentment : *The Case of Wagner* (1888) and *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (composed in 1888).

Nietzsche's behaviour towards Wagner was, naturally, commented on in many different ways. The partisans of the master showed themselves very severe, and, in my opinion, very unjust also, towards the renegade from Wagnerism ; they attributed Nietzsche's withdrawal to ambition, to the mortifications of vanity, and, above all, to the beginning of mental derangement. Their opinions may, generally speaking, be summed up thus : Until 1876 Nietzsche was the man who best understood Wagner ; his *Thought* on the work at Bayreuth was the finest that had ever been done. But this great spirit, who showed signs of becoming an eminent thinker, was seized with a kind of sickly vertigo which incited him to break with all the most sacred beliefs of humanity, and also with common sense, to exaggerate beyond all bounds his own individual importance ; and this vertigo finally led him to madness. It is needless to say that I disagree entirely with this view, which has the defect of explaining Nietzsche's intellectual development with the aid of a psychology which is really too summary and too simple : to have sincerely combated Wagner after having sincerely loved him, it need not necessarily follow that Nietzsche was a fool or a dishonest man ; this is at least what I have tried to explain.



But, on the other hand, Nietzsche's friends, who possessed the indisputable merit of elucidating the true motives of his acts, yield, perhaps, to the tendency to make their client look too innocent. He was deceived in his admiration for Wagner; he was right in altering his mind, and it has long been a proverb that only God and madmen never change. But let us go still further: being given the exact nature of his feelings towards Wagner in 1876, ought he to have written the *Richard Wagner at Bayreuth* in the dithyrambic style he adopted? Here one may ask one's self if there were not—I will not say dissimulation—but *imprudence* on Nietzsche's part; many people will think it strange to speak in this way of a master whom one is just on the point of leaving. And again: having written the *Wagner at Bayreuth*, was Nietzsche justified in writing *The Case of Wagner* later on? On this point also opinions will be divided; as indeed they are besides as to the value of all Nietzsche's morals in general. He acted logically towards himself—there is no doubt about that—by attacking Wagner as energetically as he had admired him; he made the greatest sacrifice it is possible to conceive to his intellectual sincerity; to Wagner he sacrificed, not without pain but without weakness, one of the strongest affections he had ever known. But many followers of the "old morality" will feel that there is nothing noble about this sacrifice; they will think that Nietzsche was "personal"—egoistic, in other words—in all his relations with Wagner: that from the very first, instead of *giving himself up* to his educator, he *sought himself* through Wagner; that

afterwards, once he had perceived his mistaken estimate of Wagner, instead of sacrificing a few of his own personal convictions, he preferred to appease his ego with the sacrifice of the fidelity due to friendship. Once more I say this procedure is not only irreproachable but even magnanimous, *if* the only end of human life is the development of the personality of genius, and *if*, as Nietzsche says, "*impersonality* is of no value either in heaven or on earth." But that is a point of view which, it may be said with some truth, not everybody will share; and consequently Nietzsche's action will, I think, remain "problematical" for many of our contemporaries. Many will be tempted to see in his romance with Wagner nothing but the collision—*æsthetically* and *intellectually* a very curious one, but lacking in interest *morally*—of two individualities, both of a high order, both entire and absolute, which rushed against each other with a resounding crash, merely because neither would sacrifice to friendship the least particle of its egotism. According as a thinker leans, in morals, towards individualism or altruism, so will he be inclined to judge Nietzsche's conduct with sympathy, indifference, or severity.

To close this discussion, let us quote a fine aphorism of Nietzsche, *Stellar Friendship*, in which, in an impersonal form, and of course from his own point of view, but nevertheless with much loftiness of feeling, he sums up the melancholy story of his friendship and quarrel with Wagner: "We were friends, and have become strangers to each other. But this is as it should be, and we will not hide it or dissimulate it, as if we were ashamed of it. We

are two vessels, each having its own course and its own port ; we may yet be able to meet and delight in each other, as we have once done—and at that moment these good ships lay so peacefully in the same harbour, under the same beam of sunshine, that they seemed to have already reached the end of their journey, and to have had to sail to but one and the same port. But afterwards the all-powerful necessity of our task took us once more far from each other into different seas and climates ; and it may be that we shall never again see each other—or, indeed, it may be that we shall again see but not recognise each other : so much will the sea and the sun have changed us ! We had to become strangers to each other : so did our higher law will it : and that is why we must become more worthy of respect to each other ! That is why the memory of our past friendship must become more sacred ! There is, without doubt, an immense starry circle, or orbit, of which our ends and means, different though they appear, may be only short segments—let us rise to that degree of thought ! But our life is too short, our sight too limited, for us to be anything but friends in the sense of that sublime possibility. We will, therefore, believe in our stellar friendship, even though we were fated to be enemies on earth.” \*

---

\* *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 279.

## CHAPTER III.

### NIETZSCHE THE PHILOSOPHER (1878-1888)

#### I.

DURING the nine years which followed his departure from Bâle University, Nietzsche's life was nothing but a long battle against the disease which was undermining his health, and which ended by overcoming even his stubborn resistance: in the early days of 1889 he was seized with madness. His agony lasted eleven years, during which he vegetated, without hope of recovery, at Jena, Naumburg, and Weimar, unable to complete his work, not knowing that his glory was increasing year after year; and he died at last at Weimar on Saturday, August 25th, 1900. As writers have at various times sought to discredit his whole philosophy as the work of a madman, we must here give briefly, in accordance with the papers published by Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche,\* the principal facts which throw light upon Nietzsche's mental state during his period of respite from disease.

Nietzsche belonged to a family in which lon-

---

\* See her *Leben, passim*, and her article in the *Zukunft* of January 6th, 1900: Nietzsche's illness.

gevity was exceptionally frequent. Most of his father's brothers, sisters, and ancestors lived to be more than seventy, eighty, and even ninety years old; and the same exceptional span of years is shown likewise in his mother's family; and, on the other hand, there is no trace of madness in any one of his ancestors. His father, however, died at the age of thirty-six of softening of the brain, as is noted in a diary kept by Nietzsche in his childhood: this illness, we are told by Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche, came about as the result of an accidental fall downstairs, which had taken place eleven months previously.

Nietzsche seemed to have a very robust constitution, like all his family; his only infirmity was a very pronounced short-sightedness, which was a serious hindrance to his studies, and also during his military service. His health appeared to be changed as a result of the serious illness which came upon him at the time of the war in 1870. From that moment he was troubled with periodical headaches, which continued to grow worse, accompanied by a feeling of sickness, pains in the stomach, and sore eyes. As early as 1875 these crises became very grave, being especially acute during the winter, particularly in December and January. The winter of 1876-7, spent by Nietzsche in the south, brought no lasting relief. In 1879 these attacks were more numerous and violent than formerly; from January 1879 to January 1880, Nietzsche reckons a hundred and eighteen days of *violent* seizures. He thus passed three years between life and death, always fighting courageously

against the disease that was torturing him, resolved to live and complete his task as a philosopher, and working, even when his illness was at its worst, at a volume of aphorisms, *The Dawn of Day* (1880-1), which was composed, as he writes later, "with the minimum of strength and health." And by sheer energy he ended by conquering his disease. From 1882 his health began slowly to improve. He passed his winters near Genoa or Nice, and his summers in the Oberengadin, where he had a particular fancy for the little village of Sils-Maria. Thanks to such precautions as these, he was able to lead a fairly tolerable life. He gave it up to a large literary production. He wrote and published one after another *The Joyful Wisdom* (1881-2), the four parts of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1881-5), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1885-6), *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887). In 1888 his intellectual activity redoubled. Whilst giving time to the great work in which he wished to summarise his ideas definitely, the *Will to Power*, he composed *The Case of Wagner* (May and June), in summer the *Dionysian Dithyrambs* (August), and the *Twilight of the Idols* (end of August and beginning of September); between the 3rd and 30th of September he wrote the first part of the *Will to Power*: the *Antichrist*; and again in the middle of December he drafted out *Nietzsche contra Wagner*. . . . A short time afterwards, very early in January, the signs of madness were apparent.

We do not know precisely the nature of Nietzsche's disease. His case seemed to puzzle the doctors who treated him. His sister, who attended

him several times with admirable devotion, seems inclined to think that Nietzsche's illness was accidental and not congenital: its origin probably lay in the disease he contracted in 1870, while with the ambulances: instead of then taking a long rest to make up for the strength he had lost, Nietzsche, scarcely cured, began his work again at once. This strain, aggravated by bad hygiene and the misuse of drugs, gradually ruined the health of her brother, in Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche's opinion. It is difficult, on the other hand, being given the nature of Nietzsche's illness, to give up absolutely the hypothesis of hereditary influence. Nietzsche himself had no illusions on this point: he was persuaded that the germ of his disease was transmitted to him from his father, and, during his worst attack in 1880, he awaited at every moment "the cerebral congestion which would deliver him from his sufferings."\* We must not, however, too hastily conclude that Nietzsche was always affected with latent insanity, and that it influenced his whole work all his life. There is, it is true, a rumour to the effect that Nietzsche was several times confined in private asylums, and that "he wrote his chief works in the interval between two such confinements."† But these "it is said's" were categorically contradicted by Nietzsche in the last year of his conscient life, and also by persons in close touch with him, whose statements cannot be denied without the most positive proofs. It would

---

\* *Leben*, ii. pt. 1, pp. 327 and 366.

† Max Nordau, *Degeneration*.

even seem, on the contrary, that his illness, even in the most violent attacks, never gave rise to any intellectual trouble—this fact is several times stated by Nietzsche himself, and confirmed by his sister. In 1888 he wrote: “During the sufferings brought about by my headaches, accompanied with fits of sickness which lasted without interruption for three days, I preserved an extraordinary clearness of reasoning power, and could easily solve problems for which, in my normal state, my head was not *cold* enough, and for which I was not sufficiently rapid or subtle. . . . All those morbid ailments of the intelligence, even that semi-stupor which brings fever in its train, have always been unknown to me.”\* “My pulse,” he writes on another occasion, “is as slow as that of Napoleon” (*i.e.* 60).† It must also be mentioned that the greater number of Nietzsche’s most important works date from the period between 1882 and 1887, during which his health improved very considerably. And it must finally be remarked that madness came upon him quite suddenly. Neither in his writings, nor in the letters sent to Brandes, the great Danish critic, towards the end of 1888, can we detect the slightest sign of mental aberration; even in the very last we can scarcely discern any symptoms of morbid exaltation. On the other hand, the letter to Brandes, dated January 4th, 1889, leaves us in no doubt as to Nietzsche’s mental condition: it is plainly the work of a madman.‡

---

\* *Leben*, ii. pt. 1, 328; cf.

† Brandes, *Menschen und Werke*.

‡ Brandes published the letter he received from Nietzsche



In my opinion, these facts leave no room for doubt on one important point: Nietzsche's writings were composed at a time when the author was in full possession of all his faculties. Will some thinkers nevertheless refuse to take his doctrines seriously, under the pretext that, even before his intelligence was overclouded by madness, it could have been in any way influenced by the disease which at length overcame it? This is merely a possibility unconfirmed by any positive fact. The very utmost we are at liberty to conclude is that we must examine Nietzsche's theories with particular care before admitting them to be true. But would the most elementary intellectual honesty not oblige us to do likewise with any philosophical theory? Or will it be sought to nullify all Nietzsche's theories in advance under the pretext that they are the work of a diseased thinker, a "degenerate," and that they are thus necessarily "unhealthy"? But nothing is more fruitless, it seems to me, than to attempt to distinguish between two classes of geniuses: the "healthy" and the "morbid," for it is, in my opinion,

---

in *Menschen und Werke*. The letter, dated January 4th, is written in very large handwriting on the ruled paper usually employed by children, and contains the words: "Dem Freunde Georg,—Nachdem du mich entdeckt hast, war es kein Kunststueck, mich zu finden: die Schwierigkeit ist jetzt die, mich zu verlieren . . . Der Gekreuzigte." We can dimly understand what Nietzsche meant by these lines, in which he identifies himself in imagination with Jesus, of whom he considered himself as at once the successor and the "best enemy." But there is a broad abyss between this letter and that of the preceding one, which is dated Nov. 23rd, 1888, and is clear and rational from start to finish.

quite impossible to establish a boundary line between the two categories. "There is no health *per se*," says Nietzsche, "and every attempt to define anything of this nature has miserably failed. You must bear in mind your aim, your horizon, your strength, your instincts, your errors, and, above all, the beliefs and illusions of your soul, in order to be able to decide what the word health means, even for your own body. For there is an infinite number of bodily healths, and the more one single individual is permitted to raise his head, the more the dogma of 'the inequality of all men' is forgotten and unlearned, the more likewise will the notion of a 'normal health' and the notion of a 'normal hygiene' or 'the normal course of an illness' disappear from the minds of our doctors. Then, and only then, will it be time to reflect on the health and sickness of the soul, and to lay down the principle that the virtue of every one is the health of his soul: in which case it may easily happen that one man's health may resemble another's sickness. And, finally, there will always remain the great question of knowing whether we can do without sickness or not, even in view of the development of our virtue, and if, in particular, so far as our thirst for knowledge in general and self-knowledge is concerned, there is not just as much need of a sick soul as a healthy one: in short, if the will for health only is not a prejudice and a cowardice, perhaps a vestige of attenuated barbarism, a reactionary instinct."\*

Under these conditions, we shall enter upon the

---

\* *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 120.

studies of Nietzsche's theories without bias of any kind, for or against, knowing only that they are the work of an exceptional nature ; but resolved to examine them with as much independence of mind as if their author, instead of breaking down and living for a few years in a state of madness, had died in 1889 from the effects of that cerebral congestion which he had awaited nine years before ; in which case no one, apparently, would have endeavoured to see in his work merely the fantasies and conceits of a lunatic.

## 2.

"My formula for a man's greatness," wrote Nietzsche in his journal (1888), "is *amor fati*: not to wish to alter a single fact, either in the past or in the future, eternally ; not only to bear up under necessity—but to *love* it."\* In the same way Zarathustra teaches his disciples: "The will is creative. Every 'that is' is only a fragment, an enigma, a disquieting hazard—until the day when the creating will says: '*But thus I willed it*'—until the day when the creating will says: '*But thus I will it!*' I shall always will it thus!"† In conformity with this morality, Nietzsche could "will" his disease ; he suffered without weakness or boasting, without parading his pain, without tragic attitudes and without despair, only desirous of turning to his own profit the ailments he endured ; to do his best to *exploit* the life it was his lot to lead.

---

\* *Leben*, ii. pt. i. 196.

† *Zarathustra*: Redemption.

We need not pity him—for we are in no way authorised to inflict our pity on him; but he is entitled to our respect.

The first blessing he saw in his illness was that it delivered him from his "calling" as a philologist and teacher. For a long time, indeed, the life he led at Bâle had been a burden to him. He felt more and more that the aim of his life was not philology but philosophy: "I look upon it as certain," he wrote in 1885, "that the fact of having written one single line worthy of commentary by scientists of the future, weighs more heavily in the balance than the merit of the greatest critic."\* And, as he gradually saw more clearly what his mission really was, Nietzsche felt that his duties at the university were becoming a heavy burden; for, in order to perform them conscientiously, he gave up the greater part of his time to studies which expedited but little, if at all, the great task of his life. His disease saved him from the effort, always a painful one, of breaking with his past. It imposed on him a complete change of life; brought him into solitude, made it impossible for him to read even for years at a time, condemned him to repose and idleness, made him retire into himself, and set him face to face with his *ego*. And this *ego*, stunned by the noises of the outside world, buried under a heap of erudition, and trammelled with foreign influences, began to speak to him again, timidly at first, and then more and more distinctly: "I have never given myself as much happiness as during my

---

\* *We Philologists*, sec. 2.

most painful years of sickness," writes Nietzsche in his journal in 1888. "This 'return to myself' was a kind of higher recovery for me! My physical recovery was only a result of the other one."\*

From still another point of view, Nietzsche was able to draw profit from the conditions of existence brought about by his illness: he possessed the necessary energy to see in his precarious state of health a psychological experience of exceptional interest; to observe himself with the coolness and objectivity of the scientist who is examining a curious "subject." Having long been in the habit of considering a philosophy, not as a collection of abstract and impersonal truths, but as the expression of a temperament, of a personality, he naturally came to regard with particular interest the problem of the influence of health or sickness on a philosopher's thought. If the body, our "great reason," suffers, it follows that our "little reason" must feel the after-effects of this suffering. One may thus consider different philosophical doctrines, not from the point of view of the amount of objective truth they contain, but simply as pathological symptoms: one may ask whether this or that theory or belief is a sign of health, or on the other hand of degeneracy, in him who professes it. Now, to solve this problem, a thinker will find himself favourably situated according as he himself has experienced these variable states of health, and has consequently "lived," in some way, a larger or smaller number of philosophies. Nietzsche, therefore, with

---

\* *Leben*, ii. pt. i. 328.

a scientific curiosity which, in his case, is not without some nobleness, observed how his illness reacted upon his ideas, and in what manner physical suffering made its presence felt in his thought.

He noted first of all that pain made him more defiant in regard to life, more refractory to every consoling or ornamental illusion which was sufficient to content those to whom life was merciful. "I doubt," he says, "whether suffering makes us 'better,' but it certainly does make us deeper."\* To resist prolonged physical anguish, man must exercise great self-restraint, whether he opposes it by will-power, like the Indian, who, undergoing the most tormenting torture, braves his victorious enemies to the very end; or takes refuge, like the saint and the fakir, in absolute abnegation, the entire renouncing of all will. The man who undergoes such a test without yielding learns to consider the problems of life with ever-increasing distrust; he implacably refuses to see reality through rose-coloured spectacles; he thrusts away flattering and consoling hypotheses; he feels a kind of desire for vengeance, for reprisals against life; he would fain recoup himself for the sufferings it causes him by meeting it face to face, and tearing off all the deceiving veils and tawdry finery in which it decks itself out to deceive humanity. If he still loves Life, he loves her as a jealous and defiant lover; as we love a woman who has deceived us and inspires us with doubts.

Nietzsche went on to observe that suffering—

---

\* *Joyful Wisdom*, Preface, sec. 3.

as an apparently paradoxical consequence—had made him an optimist. His illness, in fact, had taught him to know by experience what effects physiological depression had on the mind of a thinker. He saw how pain cunningly sought to wound the pride of philosophic reason, to bend it towards weakness, resignation, sadness. He noted, in the realm of the mind, what retreats, refuges, and “sunshiny corners” there were, where the thought of the sick and degenerate lay crouched, seeking for some means of alleviating its distress. And he concluded from his observations that every philosophy which sets peace above war, every morality which gives happiness a negative definition, every metaphysics which posits, as a term of evolution, a state of balance, of final repose, every religious or æsthetic aspiration for a better world, for some “beyond,” is probably, at bottom, merely a symptom of degeneration: he came to believe that all quietist or pessimistic theories were simply an indication that those who thought them suffered from some physiological ailment. And as he *willed* to recover, he *willed* optimism. Enlightened by his experiences as an invalid upon the real causes of pessimism, he gathered together all his vital strength to react against suffering, to declare war to the death against disease—physically as well as morally. By sheer force of energy he conquered: he became an optimist, and recovered his health: “I found life anew, so to speak,” wrote Nietzsche in his journal in 1888, “I re-found myself; I tasted all the good things, even the smallest, as others will do only with difficulty. I willed to recover, to *live*, my philosophy.

Let them be careful, indeed: the years in which my vitality went down to its minimum were those during which I *ceased* to be a pessimist: the instinct of preservation forbade me a philosophy of indigence and discouragement." \*

## 3.

The first act of Nietzsche's life as a philosopher, *The Birth of Tragedy*, is a sparkling affirmation of a new ideal, the tragic ideal, and an enthusiastic apology for Æschylus, Schopenhauer, and Wagner, who, he perceived, were the most illustrious representatives of this ideal. Likewise, in the latter years of his conscient life, Nietzsche again concludes by the even more triumphant and dithyrambic affirmation of his ideal—this very ideal which he had perceived as a young man; for the philosophy of the Superman taught by Zarathustra is, at bottom, almost identical with the tragic philosophy. Between these two periods of joyful and confident affirmation, there lies, as a kind of valley separating two mountain peaks, a period of negation and uncompromising criticism. Nietzsche was in too great a hurry to build, and had to recognise that the materials he was using were not lasting. We have seen how, at the close of the first stage of his life, he had perceived that the pessimism of Schopenhauer and the decadent art of Wagner were not in harmony with his own original inner convictions, and that he had come to understand that he must

---

\* *Leben*, ii. pt. i. 338.



submit to a most searching criticism his entire stock of ideas, so that he might pitilessly eliminate therefrom all foreign and parasitic elements. In the second half of his life, Nietzsche again went over, in an inverse sense, the path which he had taken in the first half: having mercilessly destroyed all the false values he had perceived in his early works, he once more rises from negation to affirmation, and exchanges the cold and fierce intrepidity of the critic for the semi-mystical exaltation of the prophet.\*

---

\* Nietzsche's life as a philosopher has often been divided into two periods—a *positivist* period (1876-82) and a *mystical* period (1882-8). The opposition between these two periods does not appear to me to be very happily indicated by this formula: the first period is above all a period of negation and pessimistic criticism; the second is a period of enthusiastic affirmation; and, in addition, the contrast between the two does not seem so absolute as to necessitate the study of each one separately. On the other hand it has been sometimes held (see in particular Mrs. Lou Andreas-Salomé's *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken*, p. 98 foll.), that, during his *positivist* period, Nietzsche was often under the influence of Paul Rée, a psychologist of the English school, whom he met at Bâle in 1874, with whom he passed the winter of 1877-8 at Sorrento, and whose works he admired very much (*Psychologische Beobachtungen*, 1875, and *Der Ursprung der moralischen Empfindungen*, 1877). Now, this influence is from the very first categorically denied by Nietzsche himself, in a letter of 1878 to Erwin Rohde, in the preface to the *Genealogy of Morals*, and in the *Ecce Homo*. Again, this assertion of Nietzsche is confirmed by the recent publication of his preliminary notes for *Human, All-too-Human*, which show that Nietzsche had conceived and put on paper all his new ideas before the autumn of 1876, at which time he became an intimate friend of Rée's. I think that from this it will be plain to the reader that Nietzsche's intellectual development was perfectly logical, and that the

The first works of Nietzsche's philosophical period, properly so-called—*Human, All-too-Human*, the *Apothegms*, the *Traveller and his Shadow*, and the *Dawn of Day*—which were written, as we have seen, just when Nietzsche's health was most seriously menaced, breathe this deep defiance of existence which had been brought about in him by illness. They have one and all a distinctly negative tendency. The air we breathe in them is bitter and sharp. Nietzsche reveals himself as the pitiless destroyer who shatters all religious, metaphysical, or moral beliefs; he compares himself to a pitman who undermines the foundations of the most firmly established dogmas, who slowly, patiently, and surely goes on digging his subterranean galleries, far from the light of day and the eyes of men. *Human, All-too-Human*, is at bottom an attack against romantic pessimism, and especially against Schopenhauer, whose doctrines Nietzsche, retracting his former opinions, repudiates entirely: he now repels the hypothesis of the will as "thing-in-itself" which he admitted in *The Birth of Tragedy*, and generally denies the necessity for believing in a "thing-in-itself": he combats morals and pity, the apology for abnegation, the doctrine that would have man give up every personal and egoistic desire; he will not even now admit that the end of humanity is the production of genius, as he affirmed

---

evolution of 1876 was not at all sudden, but one which had been slowly preparing for years. For all the reasons given, it seems to me that Rée's relations with Nietzsche are biographical rather than philosophical; and we shall not therefore consider them further in the present work.

in the *Schopenhauer as Educator*, but declares that, taken as a whole, it pursues no end whatever. In the *Traveller and his Shadow*, Nietzsche endeavours to explore "that shadow thrown by all things when the sun of knowledge shines on them";\* he knows, indeed, that we conceive things badly if we study them merely by the light of idealistic knowledge; for we then perceive only their illuminated portions, while those parts lying in the shade are hidden from our observation: that is why the thinker who would obtain a complete idea of reality should learn to consider its obscure side. Finally, in the *Dawn of Day*, Nietzsche brings criticism to bear upon the value which men in every age have regarded as the highest of all—the belief in morals. He shows that the belief in duty has neither a supernatural origin nor an imperative or absolute value; that there is no eternal and immutable rule establishing good and evil, and that moral law, which compels man to be sincere towards himself at any cost, ends by annihilating itself: man becomes an "immoralist" through morals, as he becomes an atheist through religion: his intellectual sincerity obliges him to turn his criticism against morality itself, and to cast doubts upon the lawfulness of its commands.

Nietzsche's ideal of existence, at this time, comes near to being the positivist ideal. He admits that every individual in some way recapitulates, in the first thirty years of his life, an evolution which humanity has taken perhaps thirty thousand years to accomplish. Modern man begins, while yet a

---

\* *Traveller and his Shadow*, Preface.

child, by being religious ; then, losing faith in God and in immortality, he gives himself up for a time to the most austere charms of metaphysics ; this soon ceases to be sufficient for his needs, and gradually becomes no more than an aesthetic belief, an enthusiastic cult of art. Finally the scientific instinct speaks to him with ever-increasing imperiousness, and leads the completed man to the exact study of history and nature. It is in the man of science, the "free spirit," freed from all illusion and prejudice, that Nietzsche for a short time sees the finest type of higher humanity. The free spirit is an "intellectual pessimist," and stands in need of robust moral health that he may not give himself up to despair and nihilism : man, indeed, cannot with impunity tear away the nets of error which clog him on all sides, and contemplate reality face to face. "All human life is deeply engulfed in error ; the individual cannot get out of this draw-well without becoming profoundly hostile to all his past, without looking upon all present causes of action as absurd, and without opposing irony and contempt to the passions which lead us to trust in the future, and in a coming happiness."\* Nevertheless, if he is courageous and energetic, he may find in his science itself some reasons for escaping despair. Pessimistic knowledge delivers him, indeed, from the cares that prey upon the vulgar ; if he is quite disinterested as regards almost everything which other men set any value upon, he is all the more at liberty to enjoy the sight of things ; freed

---

\* *Human, All-too-Human*, i. Aph. 34.

from all fear, he delights in soaring above all human restlessness, above customs, prejudices, and laws; he lives only to know better, and his highest reward is to understand, within and without himself, the essential laws of universal evolution; to foresee, perhaps, the future of the human race. "Do you think that such a life with such an aim is too wearisome, too empty of all that is agreeable? Then you have still to learn that no honey is sweeter than that of knowledge, and that the overhanging clouds of trouble must be to you as an udder from which you shall draw milk for your refreshment. And only when old age approaches will you rightly perceive how you listened to the voice of nature, that nature which rules the whole world through pleasure; the same life which has its zenith in age has also its zenith in wisdom, in that mild sunshine of a constant mental joyfulness; you meet them both, old age and wisdom, upon one ridge of life,—it was thus intended by Nature. Then it is time, and no cause for anger, that the mists of death approach. Towards the light is your last movement; a joyful cry of knowledge is your last sound."\*

From 1882, however, the tone of Nietzsche's works insensibly begins to change. Of course, he continues to the very end the battle which he began with the beliefs of his age: one of his last works, the *Twilight of the Idols*, bears the significant subtitle: *How to philosophise with a hammer*; in the same way the *Genealogy of Morals* and the *Anti-*

---

\* *Human, All-too-Human*, i. Aph. 292.

*christ* contain attacks of sometimes unheard-of violence against Christianity and its ascetic ideal. But the lyrical and enthusiastic tones of a hymn of praise are now mixed with all the warlike fanfares, the cries of anger and hatred, and the bitter sarcasms. Nietzsche is returning to health. After years of pain and sickness, during which he lived from day to day, awaiting death almost from one moment to another, he is again breathing freely, he again begins to dream of better days. "This book," he says, speaking of the *Joyful Wisdom*, written in 1872, "is only a cry of joy after a long period of misery and impotence; it is a hymn of cheerfulness sung by returning strength, the rising belief in a to-morrow and the day after to-morrow, the feeling and the sudden presentiment of a new future opening out for me, of coming adventures, of open seas, of new ends towards which I may direct my steps, and in which I may believe."\* He has escaped from the double tyranny of the disease which clouded the horizon of his life, and from his unbending pride which refused to bow down before pain, but compelled him to remain upright by reason of the proud principle: "An invalid has no *right* to be a pessimist."† He now felt in himself the joyous intoxication of newly found health; he had the impression of a radiant spring following upon a cold winter. In these altered circumstances, he could not be satisfied with the ideal of the "free spirit" as he had defined it in *Human, All-too-Human*. This "free spirit,"

---

\* *Joyful Wisdom*, Pref. i.

† *Human*, ii. Pref. v.

indeed, is lacking in cheerfulness; suffering has made him rather morose; he has not yet been altogether delivered from that "spirit of gravity," from "that haughty and omnipotent demon who is said to be master of the world";\* he does not yet know how to "dance," how to move freely, joyfully, and without effort, over the waves of life. And then a new vision of the future comes into Nietzsche's thought: his artistic imagination begets the shining figure of the prophet Zarathustra, who, having spent ten years in the desert "to revel in his thought and his solitude," descends amongst men to announce to them the religion of the "Superman," and the doctrine of "Eternal Recurrence," who gathers round him in his lonely cave the most refined specimens of higher but suffering humanity, "the men of great desire, of great contempt, of great disgust," those who must one day give place to the "Superman"—who cures them of their pessimism by making his vision of the future glow before their eyes, and who at last dies at the very moment when he has reached the highest degree of wisdom, at the moment when the sun of his existence is at its zenith, at the hour of "glorious noon," consecrating by his death the triumph of his doctrine.

We propose to sum up Nietzsche's philosophy in the two following chapters, setting forth first of all the negative side of his doctrine: the criticism of man as he is, of his beliefs, and his instincts; then the positive side: the religion of the "Superman,"

---

\* *Zarathustra*: The Dance Song.

and of "Eternal Recurrence." I am aware that grave objection may be taken to this method. The gravest is that, when showing Nietzsche's doctrines in a systematic form, one may give them a strikingly dogmatic appearance which they do not and do not wish to possess. Indeed, it is certain that from 1878 to 1888 Nietzsche's thought did not remain unchanged: I myself have just shown that towards 1882 it took a very different direction from that which it had previously followed; and it would not be difficult to show other divergencies of greater or less importance in the periods between 1878-82 and 1882-8. Then again Nietzsche had no desire to be a school-philosopher. Truth *in itself* is quite indifferent to him; he does not trouble to prove his propositions by logical arguments, and still less to build up a new, coherent, and well-arranged system; he never tries to refute by mere reasoning those opinions which he looks upon as erroneous. His procedure is always the same. He says: "My instinct makes me see in this or that man or group of men only degenerate or contemptible beings, and in this or that theory or belief a morbid principle. If it is true that I represent a principle of life and my opponents a principle of death, the victory must inevitably be mine; in the contrary case, it is I who, no less inevitably, will succumb. And as I desire only one single thing, the triumph of life, I can rejoice in either victory or defeat. All else is nothing." Is it not unwise, in such circumstances, to build a "system" of Nietzsche, as one would build a "system" of Kant or Schopenhauer, since logical truth was treated



with such scant consideration in the mind of our philosopher?

If, however, I have decided, instead of examining the works of Nietzsche one by one, to give a general outline of the chief problems he deals with and the solutions he gives of them, it is because Nietzsche turned several times to the same questions, first of all stating a problem summarily, then coming back to it again, sifting it, mastering it, until the moment when he gives us its final solution. To analyse his works separately would thus lead us to take up the same questions time after time. Again—and this is what seemed to me the most important reason—if Nietzsche paid little regard to logic, and did not seek truth for itself alone, it does not follow that his thought is unconnected and illogical—far from it. I am, on the contrary, convinced that Nietzsche really conceived a system, well pieced together in all its parts, and that, if he never gave a complete exposition of it in a systematic form, it was chiefly because his state of health obliged him to set down what he thought in the form of aphorisms, which he could draw up in his head when walking, without writing them down, whilst it was impossible for him, for bodily reasons, to begin the composition of long-winded works. It is also to be noted that, in the latter part of his life, Nietzsche composed his works much more rigorously than during the period of 1878–82. The *Genealogy of Morals*, in spite of its apparent division into aphorisms, is in reality an actual “treatise”; in like manner the *Will to Power*, if we may judge from the fragments



he left, would have been much more systematic than all his preceding works. I think, therefore, it will not be perverting Nietzsche's thought to present it in the form—necessarily somewhat artificial—of a kind of philosophical doctrine, even if he himself never expounded it in this way. I shall also endeavour, by means of numerous quotations, to give the reader as clear a conception as possible of this vibrant and coloured work, so free from all scholastic pedantry, and where we feel, at every page, that the author has put his whole heart and soul into the study of problems which, to use his own picturesque expression, "have a surface bristling with prickles, and are not formed for caressing and flattery."

## CHAPTER IV.

### NIETZSCHE'S SYSTEM—NEGATIVE SIDE: MAN.

#### I.

EVERY epoch, every civilisation, has what Nietzsche calls its "table of values"; in other words, it admits a hierarchy of values; it thinks one particular thing superior to another; it believes this action to be preferable to that: it decides, to take a case in point, that truth is superior to error, or that a deed of mercy is preferable to an act of cruelty. The drawing up of this table of values, and, in particular, the determining of the highest values, is the most momentous event of universal history, since this hierarchy of values determines the conscious or unconscious acts of every individual, and decides all the judgments which we bring to bear on these acts. In philosophy, then, this problem of the determining of values takes precedence over all others; at all events it is upon it that Nietzsche concentrated all his efforts. And this is the result of his meditations: the table of values at present adopted by European civilisation has been badly drawn up, and must be revised from top to bottom. We must proceed with what he calls "the trans-

valuation of all values" (*Umwertung aller Werthe*), changing as a consequence the direction of our whole life, and modifying the essential principles upon which we base our judgments. Towards the end of his conscious life, his imagination, exalted by the deep solitude around him, and perhaps also by the approach of the crisis which was to take away his reason, saw in this philosophical revolution the starting-point of a formidable overturning and confusion among human beings. "I swear to you," he wrote to Brandes on November 20th, 1888, "that within two years the whole world will be writhing in convulsions. I am a fate. . . . (*Ich bin ein Verhängniss*)."\*

The modern man sets down at the top of his table of values a certain number of absolute values, which he regards as above all discussion, and which serve him as a standard to appreciate all reality. Among these the True and the Good are universally recognised. If there is one fact beyond all dispute, it is that truth is better than error: to prove that any statement or theory is false is sufficient to discredit it; the cult of truth, of sincerity at any cost, is perhaps one of our firmest beliefs. In like manner the most daring thinkers have stopped short, seized with sudden fear, before the problem of good and evil. Kant looked upon his *Categorical Imperative* as a truth superior to all reasoning and discussion: "act in such a way that thy conduct may be taken as a universal rule." Schopenhauer himself, even when criticising the

---

\* Brandes, *Menschen und Werke*.

Kantian theory of duty, nevertheless admitted that all men are in practical accord in regard to this formulation of the substance of moral law. *Neminem laede, immo omnes, quantum potes, juva*: "harm no one, help others as much as thou canst." Philosophers have never dared to cast doubts upon the lawfulness of moral judgments; their only endeavour has been to find the "ground-work of morals," to see the rational why and wherefore—practically quite indifferent—of these judgments which are constantly brought to bear upon every human action in the name of a "moral conscience" before which every one bows down. Now, it is precisely against these convictions, which to-day rule over the interior life of almost all men, that Nietzsche declares war. Instead of accepting them respectfully as a fact which it is superfluous to discuss, as an authority whose credentials it is impious to examine, he considers them boldly as a problem; he is not afraid to ask himself the clear question: Why truth rather than error? Why good rather than evil? And with the problem thus set forth, he solved it with the same daring by taking as the rule of conduct of the truly free man the motto of that mysterious order of "Assassins" whom the Crusaders met long ago in the Holy Land: "Nothing is true; all things are lawful."

For Nietzsche, indeed, all those mysterious and superhuman metaphysical entities which man has always believed to be without himself, and which he has revered under different names—"God," the world of the "Thing-in-itself," "Truth," the

“Categorical Imperative”—are merely phantoms of our imagination. The most immediate reality, the only reality which it is permitted us to know, is the world of our desires, of our passions. All our deeds, wishes, and thoughts are, in the end, governed by our instincts, and these instincts all spring from one primordial instinct, the “will to power,” which suffices—according to Nietzsche’s hypothesis—to explain by itself alone all the manifestations of life of which we are witnesses. Every living thing—plant, animal, or man—tends to increase its strength by securing a mastery over other beings, other forces. This continuous effort, this perpetual struggle, in which every being ceaselessly stakes its life in order to increase its power, is the fundamental law of all existence. All manifestations of life, without exception, are governed by instinct. If man aspires to virtue, truth, or art, it is by reason of a natural instinct which, to satisfy itself, impels him to act in a certain way. Thus the morals which the Christian regards as a divine revelation, and to which he subordinates his entire existence, are in reality a human invention, designed to satisfy this or that instinct. So also truth, to which the scientist devotes his entire life, was first sought for by the will to power which was tending to enlarge its sphere of domination. But, through some singular aberration, man has come to worship as an ideal that which he himself created to answer one of his own needs. Instead of saying: “I live to satisfy my instincts, and in virtue of that law I shall seek the good and the true as far as my will to power impels me,” he lays it down as a

principle: "The good and the true must be sought *for themselves alone*, good must be done because it is good, we must aspire to truth for the love of truth; man's life is of no value except in so far as he subordinates his egoistic interest to this ideal end; he must therefore, in the name of this ideal, restrain his personal instincts and look upon egoism as an evil." Now, the man who reasons thus, and who acts in consequence, is likewise impelled by an instinct, it is true,—for instinct is the final motive of all our acts—but this instinct is perverted.

Man's instincts, indeed, are not all equally healthy: some of them are normal, and tend to increase his vitality; but others are morbid, and tend to weaken it. Diseases of the body arise from natural causes, and develop by virtue of the laws of the organism; they will stop at nothing less than the destruction of the body, and must consequently be combated by doctors. The same may be said of diseases of the personality: they are of natural origin; but their consequences are no less grave. According as the normal or the morbid instincts predominate in a given individual, he will either be a fine specimen of humanity or a degenerate. We thus find, on the one hand, men who are healthy in body and soul, who say "yea" to existence, who live happily, and are worthy of perpetuating life; and, on the other hand, the sick, the impotent, the decadent, whose vital instinct has been lowered, who say "nay" to existence, who incline towards death and annihilation, who no longer seek, or at all events should no longer seek, to perpetuate the race. This is a natural and physio-

logical reality about which there can be no dispute: *as a matter of fact*, life is everywhere either in a state of progression or decadence, it is increasing or diminishing in intensity; man is a plant which either vegetates miserably or blooms magnificently, throwing out sprouts and blossoms on all sides. It is on this fact that Nietzsche bases his table of values.

He reasons thus: "I do not know whether life is, in itself, good or bad. Nothing is more useless, indeed, than the eternal debate between the optimists and the pessimists, for the excellent reason that no one in the world is capable of judging what life is worth: the living cannot do it, because they form part of the discussion and are even the subjects of the dispute; the dead cannot do so, either—because they are dead.\* Nobody, then, can say what life, taken as a whole, is worth; I shall never know whether it would have been better for me not to have existed or to have existed. But from the moment I live I *will* that life shall be as exuberant, luxuriant, and tropical as possible, within and without myself. I shall therefore say 'yea' to all that makes life more beautiful, more worthy of being lived, more intense. If it be proved to me that error and illusion can serve for the development of life, I will say 'yea' to error and illusion; if it be proved to me that those instincts labelled 'bad' by present morality—such as hardness, cruelty, deceit, bold daring, a pugnacious disposition

---

\* *Twilight of the Idols*; Sokrates, and Moral als Wider-natur.



—are likely to increase the vitality of man, I will say 'yea' to sin and evil; if it be proved to me that suffering as well as pleasure takes part in the upbringing of the human race, I will say 'yea' to suffering. On the other hand, I will say 'nay' to all that tends to diminish the vitality of the human plant. And if I find that truth, virtue, goodness—in a word, all the values hitherto respected and worshipped by mankind—are harmful to life, then I will say 'nay' to science and morals."

In the next chapter we shall study how, according to Nietzsche, our present table of values has been formed, what their origin was, and what state of soul they reveal in the modern European.

## 2.

"In the course of my wanderings among the many coarse or refined moralities which have hitherto prevailed on earth, and prevail still, I observed certain traits which appeared to be connected, and which always showed themselves simultaneously; so that two types were finally revealed to me, separated from each other by an important difference. There is a *morality of masters* and a *morality of slaves*. . . . Moral values have been determined either by a race of masters, conscious and proud of the distance that separates them from the ruled race—or by a crowd of subjected ones, slaves, inferiors of all kinds." \*

---

\* *Beyond Good and Evil*, Aph. 260. The germ of this distinction may be found in *Human*, i. Aph. 45.

At the beginning of European civilisation we see recurring at every moment the fact that gives rise to these two types of morality: a warlike race, a band of men of prey, pounces upon an inferior race, more peaceful and less warlike, conquers it, and exploits it for the profit of the conquerors. It was in this way that the Greek and the Roman civilisations arose, or again, in more recent times, that the Teutonic kingdoms were founded upon the ruins of the Roman Empire. The man of prey, the aristocrat, can determine for himself the value of men and things: what is useful or harmful to him is good or bad in itself; his morality is only the joyful knowledge of his perfection and strength. He calls "good" (*gut*) whoever is his equal, the noble, the master; and "bad" (*schlecht*) whoever is his inferior, the man of lower rank, the slave, whom he despises. "Good" for him is thus only the collection of physical and moral qualities which he values in himself and his equals. It pleases him to be strong and powerful, to be able to control others and also himself, to be hard on himself as well as on others; and, as a consequence, he respects the same qualities in others. On the other hand, he despises weakness and cowardice in all its forms—fear, flattery, baseness, humility, and, above all, lying. He sets small store by pity or disinterestedness, these virtues so highly esteemed to-day; for it seems to him that these feelings are rather out of place, and even somewhat absurd, in a master, a chief. But he admires strength, audacity, deceit, and even cruelty, because these are the qualities that assure him of supremacy in war. Above all—and

it is this in particular that shocks the modern mind—he is firmly convinced that he is under no obligations except to his peers, that he may act towards the slave and the stranger exactly as he thinks fit, treating them as harshly or delicately as he pleases, without any consequences following. Towards his equals, on the other hand, he is under very strict obligations; he must be faithful both in gratitude and in vengeance, and return good and evil in just measure; he owes absolute devotion to friend and chief, and deference to the aged. He has an innate respect for tradition: far from believing in progress, he honours the past, and is prejudiced against the rising generations. Aristocratic morality is hard and intolerant. As, in general, noblemen feel themselves to be a minority encamped in the midst of a secretly hostile multitude, they must at all costs maintain intact, in their own race, the qualities which have assured their triumph: that is a matter of life or death for them; so the customs which have to do with the education of children, marriage, and the relationship between young and old, are very rigorous among them: everything is calculated with a view to prevent degeneration, to maintain the primitive type of the race in as fixed and pure a form as possible. Finally, an aristocratic race has its god, in whom it incarnates all the virtues by which it has attained to power, and to whom it shows by sacrifices its gratitude for being what it is. This god, which the aristocrat conceives in his own image, must in consequence have the power of being useful or harmful, friendly or inimical, beneficent or maleficent; it is, indeed, the “will to

power" that has led the masters towards domination, that has made them strong and happy; and the cult which they make of it is the expression of their joy of living, of the pleasure they take in themselves at being beautiful and powerful.

Quite different is the second of the great types of morality, the morality of the slaves, the weak, and the conquered. If the prevailing feeling in the masters is pride, the joy of living, the weak man will on the other hand have a pessimistic tendency to mistrust life, and, in particular, instinctive hatred for the powerful man who oppresses him. It must, indeed, be remarked that the "noble" races have always been terrible enemies of the inferior races. Full of respect for and deference towards each other, the masters recognise no law once they find themselves in the presence of a stranger. They recoup themselves, through him, for the self-restraint they are obliged to practise towards their equals. Against him everything done is lawful—outrage, murder, pillage, torture; against him the nobles once more become magnificent and atrocious beasts of prey; and they return from their sanguinary freaks in a joyful mood, their consciences at peace, fully convinced that they have carried out a glorious exploit, worthy to be sung by the poets. Their victims thus come to look upon them as odious and terrible monsters: "This *audacity* of the noble races—foolish, absurd, sudden in its manifestations; the unexpected and improbable in their enterprises . . . their indifference to and contempt for security, life, and happiness, their ineffable serenity of soul, their profound delight in destruction, victory, and cruelty

—all this was summed up by the victims of their enterprises in the image of the 'barbarian,' 'the wicked enemy,' the 'Goth,' or 'Vandal,' for example.\* Thus the strong and powerful man, the "good" man of the master-morality, becomes the "evil" man (*böse*) of the slave-morality. "Bad" from the standpoint of the weak, is everything violent, hard, terrible, all that inspires fear. "Good," on the other hand, includes all those virtues, despised by the masters, which make life easier for the oppressed, the suffering: pity, gentleness, patience, industry, humility, benevolence; the "good" man, the powerful warrior of the master-morality, becomes in slave-morality a quiet, easy-going creature, somewhat contemptible even, because he is so inoffensive—too much of a "good-natured soul."

## 3.

Let us examine a little more closely into the genesis of the table of values drawn up by the slaves: it was among them, indeed, that the Christian morality and religion arose, on which our entire system of modern values is based.

The crowd of slaves, the swarms of the weak and disinherited, and the degenerate of every kind, find their natural leader in the priest. What is the priest? The priest himself must be a degenerate to be able to understand the needs of his suffering flock, even to be able to live among them. But he must have preserved intact his instinct of mastery,

---

\* *Genealogy of Morals*, i. sec. II.

so as to gain the confidence of these suffering people, to inspire them with fear, to become their guardian, their support, their tyrant, their god. His mission lies, first of all, in defending this crowd of weak people from the strong. It follows that he will thus be the sworn enemy of the masters; against them he will not scruple to employ all the means in his power, particularly those weapons of the weak: deception and lying; he will make himself a "beast of prey"—and a beast of prey which will almost always be victorious over those whom he fights against. But this is not all: besides this, he must defend the flock against itself, against the evil feelings which naturally spring up amongst all such agglomerations of weak people. He combats with wisdom and harshness the beginning of anarchy, of every symptom of dissolution. He skilfully manipulates that dangerous explosive, resentment, which ceaselessly accumulates amongst his followers, and arranges for it to burst without the explosions injuring either flock or shepherd. Such is the historical mission of the priest—a useful mission in one sense, since it prevents any catastrophes by disciplining the multitude of degenerates—but an inexpedient mission, nevertheless, for it hinders the course of natural development. The natural end towards which all the weak, the sick, and the pessimists of every kind are tending is a happy death, a peaceful sanctuary, the inviolable refuge of all unfortunates. But even in those whose vital energy has diminished, the "will to power" instinctively defends itself against nihilism: whilst deforming reality, it suggests to them new reasons for living,

supplies them with expedients for deceiving their suffering, and deludes them as to the cause of their malady. The priest with consummate skill takes advantage of this natural instinct; he directs it, stimulates it, exaggerates it, and makes it the instrument of his domination. He becomes the protector of an innumerable number of weak people. At what cost? We shall soon see.

It was among the Jews, that race of priests which, although situated in the very worst conditions of existence, has nevertheless kept itself alive for generation after generation by miracles of tenacity, that there takes place what Nietzsche calls "the revolt of the slaves" in morality. "It was the Jews," he says, "who were the worst adversaries of the equation of the aristocratic values (good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = beloved of the gods); with terrifying logic they endeavoured to overturn it, they seized it with the grappling-hooks of the deepest hatred—the hatred of the impotent—and they held fast. Only the unhappy, they said, are the good; the poor, the impotent, the weak alone are good; the suffering, the miserable, the sick, the ugly alone are pious, they only are the beloved of God, happiness is reserved for them alone—you, on the contrary, the noble, the powerful, you, who have always been evil, cruel, sensual, insatiable, impious, you will also be eternally unhappy, condemned, and cursed!"\*

Christianity has inherited this new table of values drawn up by Judaism. The Christian priest had

---

\* *Genealogy of Morals*, i. sec. 7.

only to carry on the work of the Jewish priest, and we can see to-day that he is the conqueror after a struggle of two thousand years.

The first act of this great transvaluation of values was the hypothesis of *soul* and of *free-will*. In reality, there is no soul separate from the body; neither is there such a thing as free-will, nor yet is there non-free-will. There are only strong wills which show themselves by their great deeds, and weak wills whose actions are considerably less. Phrases such as "the lightning flashes" or "the great man triumphs over his adversaries" are really tautologies. Lightning is not something which is capable of flashing or of not flashing; it is only lightning at the very instant it flashes. In the same way, the amount of strength shown in the actions of a powerful man only exists through its manifestations. Now, the vulgar mind, by virtue of an absolutely arbitrary hypothesis, has distinguished the being from the phenomenon, the will from its manifestations.

It was supposed that behind human actions, behind the visible effects of the will to power, was a being, a soul, which was the cause of these effects; and this soul has been conceived as an entity, free to manifest itself in any way it thinks fit, to act either one way or another. This illusion of free-will, once created and admitted, the slave was able—at least in imagination—to become the equal of his master, or even to surpass him. If the value of an individual is contained not in the strength he controls, but in the use he makes of his free-will, there is nothing to hinder the weak from excelling the strong, which



may take place according to the following reasoning: The strong man acts as a strong man, but this is wrong, for it is "bad" to act as a strong man. The weak man wishes to act as a weak man (indeed, he could not do otherwise), and this is right, for it is "good" to act as a weak man. Hence, the weak man is better than the strong; and Nietzsche describes with astonishing animation the mysterious and ambiguous operation thanks to which these slaves, boiling with resentment, succeed in belittling their masters (*i.e.* in imagination) and in transforming themselves into "saints" and martyrs.

Will some one look down into the secret of the way ideals are manufactured on earth? Who has the courage to do so? Up! Here you can see into the gloomy workshop. But wait a moment, good Sir Paul Pry and dare-devil: your eye must first get accustomed to this false and uncertain light—that's it! Enough! Now speak! What's going on down there below? Tell me what you see, man of most dangerous curiosity! I am now the listener!

"I see nothing; I hear the more. There is a prudent, knavish, suppressed whispering in every nook and corner. They lie, it seems to me: a sugary mildness cleaves to every sound. Weakness is to be falsified into merit, there is no doubt of that; you were quite right in that respect."

Go on!

"And impotence which doth not retaliate is to be falsified into goodness, timorous baseness into 'humility'; submission to those they hate into 'obedience' (*i.e.* to some one who, they say, commands this obedience—'God' they call him). The inoffensiveness of the weak, cowardice itself—of which they possess more than their share—their standing-at-the-door, the unavoidable necessity of their waiting—these are called by good names here: such as 'patience'; they even call it the virtue of virtues. Not-to-be-able-to-take-revenge is called Not-to-wish-to-take-revenge, perhaps even forgiveness ('for they know not what they do: we alone know what *they* do').

Then they talk of love for one's enemy, and sweat in doing so."

Go on!

"They are wretched, no doubt of that, all these mutterers and underground counterfeiterers, though they huddle warmly against one another. But they say that their wretchedness is a choice and distinction of God, that the best-liked dogs are whipped; and that perhaps their wretchedness may be a preparation, a trial, a schooling; perhaps even more—something which at some future time will be requited and paid for with huge compound interest in gold: no! in happiness! This they call 'bliss.'"

On!

"Now they tell me that they are not only better than the powerful ones, the lords of the earth, whose spit they must lick (*not* from fear: no, not at all from fear! but because God commands them to respect authority)—that they are not only better but will certainly be even 'better off' some day. But enough, enough, I cannot stand it any longer. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop in which *ideals are manufactured*—meseems it stinks from prevarication."

No! just one minute more. You have said nothing about the master-stroke of these necromancers, who make milk-white innocence out of every black. Didn't you notice what the very perfection of their *raffinement* is—their keenest, finest, subtlest, falsest, artistic stroke? Give heed! Those cellar animals, sated with hatred and revenge—what do they make out of hatred and revenge? Did you ever hear those words before? Going merely by what they say, would it occur to you that you were among so many men of *ressentiment*?

"I understand. I open my eyes again (oh! ah! and shut my nose). Now I can distinguish what they have been saying so often: 'We, the good—we are the just.' What they demand they do not call retribution, but 'the triumph of *justice*'; what they hate is not their enemy—no! They hate 'injustice' and 'ungodliness.' What they believe in and hope for is not the hope of revenge, the intoxication of sweet revenge ('sweeter than honey' Homer called it long ago); but 'the triumph of God, the *just* God, over the godless.' What remains for them to love on earth is not their brethren in hatred, but their

'brethren in love,' as they call them ; all the good and the just on earth."

And what name do they give that which serves them as a consolation in all the sufferings of life—their phantasmagoria of anticipated future bliss ?

"What? Do I hear aright? They call it 'the last judgment,' the coming of *their* kingdom, the 'kingdom of God!' Meanwhile, however, they live 'in faith,' 'in love,' 'in hope.'"

Enough! Enough!\*

We thus see the ideal of the slave and how he has composed his table of moral values. He lives, whether in good or bad surroundings, borne up by the consoling fictions which he has himself created ; but physiological depression, the initial cause of his weakness, always weighs heavily upon him. He suffers, he becomes impatient with his malady. Here the priest intervenes, not to cure him as a doctor would do, by dealing directly with the real physical cause of his complaint—but only to make the patient forget the pain he feels.

For this purpose, he first of all prescribes narcotics, which merely serve to take away the suffering for the time being, without in any way rectifying the physiological trouble from which it arises. He treats the patient by hypnotism ; and prescribes a régime which tends to reduce his animal and intellectual life to the lowest point : thanks to ascetic practices, to the mortification of the flesh, to systematic "unbeastifying," he ends by plunging his patient into a kind of physical and moral torpor, which renders him less sensitive to pain. He even succeeds at times in making him quite insensible.

---

\* *The Genealogy of Morals*, i. 14.

By this treatment, he makes a fakir or "saint" of the degenerate. Again, in a large number of cases, the priest does nothing more than order his patient to follow some mechanical and regular calling which takes up all his attention and makes him a kind of automaton, and prevents him from thinking of himself. Or again, he may prescribe him to indulge in some little or easily obtained pleasure: *e.g.* the "love of one's neighbour" in all its forms, such as benevolence, charity, mutual assistance, etc. Or, finally, he gathers his sick following in a group to make them forget their individual miseries in the trifling distractions of social life. But, by the side of these innocent means he uses, as a cure, another remedy which is as dangerous as it is efficacious: a dreadful poison, which makes these sick forget their sufferings, but which ruins their organism more than ever. This poison is the feeling of *sin*. The notion of sin is based upon the natural foundation of two feelings which arise spontaneously in the human heart without the intervention of the priest: "bad conscience" and the belief in a "debt" contracted by man towards the Divinity. Bad conscience is, according to Nietzsche, the consequence of a profound uneasiness which took possession of man when, ceasing to be the savage and solitary animal which he was at first, he became a member of an organised society—one head of cattle in a herd. The State was probably at the beginning a dreadful tyranny imposed upon a peaceful or badly organised society by a band of men of prey—of powerful warriors associated with a view to pillage and war. The conditions of existence of the conquered races

were suddenly changed from top to bottom. For their guidance in life, they no longer freely followed the natural instinct which had governed them; they had to make an effort to behave prudently and to restrain their own desires when these clashed with the desires of their masters; they had to act by reason and reflection. But the instincts form a certain amount of strength which is necessarily shown in some effects. If this strength is restrained in such a way that it can no longer be expended *outwardly* by immediate reactions, it will be changed into latent energy, and will show its existence by *inward* work. It was by a metamorphosis of this kind that "bad conscience" came into being. It is the result of that restraint which the natural instincts of man had to undergo at the time when he passed from a state of independence to a state of slavery. As a wild beast, which, tormented by home-sickness, anxious to return to its free life in the desert, will bruise itself by rushing against the bars of its cage, so also did primitive man make himself suffer after having become domesticated and imprisoned. Fettered in his exterior manifestations, his instinct of life was expressed by a kind of internal fermentation. Man, henceforth, had an interior life which made him an infinitely more interesting being than the conquering brute—but sick.

A feeling of a debt towards the Divinity, on the other hand, is one of the most ancient manifestations of the religious spirit. In early times, indeed, each generation of men believed that they were in-

debted for their own present prosperity to preceding generations, and that their ancestors, having become potent spirits, even after death, continued to exercise a beneficent influence on the destinies of their descendants. But every service must be paid for: men thus came to have the feeling that they had contracted a debt towards their forbears, and that, in exchange for their protection, they owed them sacrifices. From this arose the worship of the gods, which we may find at the beginning of every civilisation. This worship, however, gradually became changed. The veneration that man originally accorded to the entire line of his ancestors became concentrated on the primitive ancestor of the race. Then this ancestor in his turn was raised to the rank of a god, and this god was regarded as being all the more powerful and terrifying in accordance with the prosperity of the people who honoured him: and in the same proportion as the greatness of the god increased, so also increased the feeling of the debt contracted towards him, and, as a consequence, the fear of not doing enough for him. By virtue of this logic, the feeling of man's dependence upon his god acquired its maximum of intensity when the single god of Christianity had vanquished all the gods of the pagans, and ruled as absolute master over the greater part of Europe. Man then came to believe that, since this debt was too great ever to be paid, he stood in the same relation to God as an insolvent debtor to his creditor, leaving himself open, as a result, to the most terrible of punishments. In his anguish, man sought by every means in his power to lay the

responsibility of this debt on some one removed as far as possible from himself. His thoughts turned to his first ancestor who would have incurred the divine malediction. He invented "original sin" and the dogma of "Predestination." He accused nature without himself and instincts within himself, and looked upon them as the source of evil. He cursed the universe itself and aspired to nothingness, or to another life. Finally, he gave this paradoxical solution to the problem which tormented him: the debt contracted by man towards God is too immense for man ever to be able to pay it in full; God only can pay God. Now, in His love for man God sacrificed Himself to free His insolvent debtor. He made Himself man and offered Himself as a sacrifice, and by that act of love He has redeemed those among man whom He thinks worthy of His grace.

Let us build up in our imagination this tragic notion of a debt contracted towards the Divinity with the feeling of "bad conscience," and we shall have "sin." The man who has this "bad conscience" feels an unhealthy desire to make himself suffer. Of course, he does not take into consideration that the real cause of such a desire is the violent and sudden restriction of his will to power, of his natural instincts; but he knows, on the other hand, that he has contracted a heavy debt towards the Divinity which he is not in a position to pay, and this debt naturally appears to him to be the motive of all the sufferings he inflicts upon himself. He wishes by these sufferings to appease the wrath of his irritated creditor, to expiate his "sin." Thus we see him henceforth persisting in torturing him-

self to pay a debt, the amount of which he believes to be infinite, calling out for suffering and ever greater suffering to gratify his insatiable desire of expiation. This notion of sin, once constituted, became the priest's instrument of domination for the souls in his charge, and it was by means of it that he gained the upper hand of his unhappy flock, and brought under his control all the suffering sheep which he met with on his way. He went among the degenerates who, tormented by a physical disease, the nature of which they did not know, were looking anxiously for the cause of it, or, better still, for the responsible author of the depression into which they felt themselves plunged, and he persuaded all these unfortunates that they themselves were the real cause of their sufferings, that these sufferings must be looked upon as a feeble expiation of the sins they were guilty of, and that they should consequently accept them, not only with resignation but with joy, as a trial sent by God. The unhappy wretches believed it. In their distress they accepted the explanation he gave of their suffering. They quietly let themselves be inoculated with the dreadful poison of the belief in sin, and for century after century there appeared all through Europe a long procession of penitent "sinners," who marched towards death after a long martyrdom, their bodies weak, their nerves shattered, their souls distracted, a prey to crises of despair or to ecstasies of delirium, athirst for torture, and haunted by the fixed idea of sin and eternal damnation.

What characterises all Christianity, according to



Nietzsche, is that, as a religion, it ends in Nihilism. It has created a whole world of pure fictions. It has invented causes, "God," "soul," "the Spirit," "Free-will"—and imaginary effects: "sin," "grace"—relations between imaginary beings, "God," "Spirit," "Souls." It has invented an imaginary natural science founded upon its misapprehension of natural causes, an imaginary psychology based upon a false interpretation of phenomena (for example, suffering explained as the consequence of sin); an imaginary teleology, the "Kingdom of God," "eternal life." At the same time as the Christian built up his imaginary world, he anathematised the real universe, he opposed "nature," as the source of all evil, to "God," the source of all good. The origin of the Christian illusion is thus clearly seen: it springs from the hatred of reality; it is the product of a degenerate humanity, in which there is more grief than joy, of a weary and suffering humanity which is tending towards pessimism, towards the negation of life, and aspires to return to nothingness.

## 4.

The most important fact of present day European history is the almost general triumph of slave morality over master morality: almost everywhere modern man accepts the table of values created by the resentment of the slaves, the physiological and psychological operation of the degenerate, and the conscious or unconscious lying of their natural leaders, the ascetic priests. For two thousand years bitter war has been waged between Rome, the inheritor of Greek

tradition and Greek aristocratic ideals, the cradle of the strongest and most noble race that ever lived, and Judæa, the land of resentment and hatred, the country of the sacerdotal spirit, and Judæa has won. The Renaissance, checked in its flight by Luther and Protestantism, the French aristocratic and classical ideal sinking after two centuries into the sanguinary whirlpool of the Revolution; Napoleon, the unique type, the superhuman, perhaps inhuman type, of master, vanquished by the Holy Alliance: these are the successive stages which led to the victory of the slave ideal. Europe is now in complete decadence; we can see everywhere unmistakable symptoms of a diminished vitality. It is even to be feared that the human race will cease to grow, and will gradually be swallowed up in an ignominious mediocrity.

It is the slave morality which, above all, dominates modern thought under the pompous name of "the religion of human suffering." Let us examine a little more closely into the meaning concealed in this phrase.

A psychological analysis of pity reveals to us in the first place that this feeling, about which present day moralists boast so much, is neither so disinterested nor so worthy of admiration as they would have us believe. Indeed, a strong mixture of very egoistic pleasure enters into pity. We do good unto others as they do evil unto us only in order to give ourselves the feeling of our power and make them submit in some way to its domination. The strong man of noble instincts seeks his equal to fight with, to make him bow down before his power;

on the other hand, he despises those who fall a prey to him too easily, and disdainfully sends away from him those who in his opinion are unworthy to be his adversaries. The weak man, on the other hand, will be content with a mediocre prey and with easily-gained victories. Now, a sick man, an unfortunate, is not very terrifying, and men will always be better pleased with a good deed than an evil one. Hence a charitable man is sure to meet with the minimum of resistance, and to gain his victory without the slightest danger to himself. Pity is thus a virtue of mediocre souls, and one which is followed by no ill-consequences when it is exercised upon mediocre souls. On the other hand, it shows a want of respect, and could almost be classed as a bad action, when directed towards a man of noble mind. The noble soul dissimulates its sorrows, sufferings, and infirmities, and defends itself against both good will and evil will. The suffering man, disgraced and hideous, is thus entitled to hate the indiscreet witnesses of his misery and ugliness—those who do not blush to look upon what should remain hidden from all eyes, and who overwhelm an unfortunate man with pity which is not asked for. But, more than this, pity is not only an uninteresting feeling, it is also a depressing feeling. Let us suppose for a moment that the religion of human suffering became general among all men. What would happen? The sum total of suffering, far from being diminished, would be considerably increased: every one, besides his own personal misfortunes, would have to bear a share of the misfortunes of others. Pity is thus a principle which

tends to enfeeble the vital instinct : it helps forward the discharge of those forces which have already occasioned suffering : it makes pain infectious. A still more serious consequence of the religion of pity is, that it counteracts the normal action of the law of selection, which tends to weed out those beings who are ill-adapted to their surroundings, and who have consequently a much smaller chance of being able to emerge victorious from the struggle for existence. For the religion of pity, like Christianity, for example, tends to protect the existence of degenerates. That is the principal cause of the success which such religions have obtained in every age : indeed, the number of the feeble and the weak is legion, while the perfectly healthy man, well-formed in every respect, is the exception. In every species of the higher animals, we may say that the majority are badly formed, degenerate, and fatally destined to suffering. The human species is no exception to this rule—quite the contrary. Man himself, being a superior, and above all, a perfectible type in the scale of beings, who is susceptible of variation, and who has not yet attained his definite and final form, is particularly exposed to accidents, and the number of badly-formed individuals, in proportion to the number of well-formed individuals, is even higher in the human species than in species of other animals. The religion of pity carries with it the extreme, evil consequence of prolonging a number of useless lives which are really condemned by the law of selection. It preserves and increases the amount of misery in the world, and consequently makes the universe uglier and life more

worthy to be "negatived"; it is a practical form of Nihilism; it is a menace to existence and to the moral health of fine types of humanity. The sight of misery, suffering, deformity, and ugliness is the worst of dangers for the higher man: it leads him to say Nay to life, either by excess of disgust or excess of compassion. Pity may become a devastating plague, ruining a generous nature from top to bottom, if such a nature has not the necessary hardness to offer resistance. Christianity and the religion of pity have effectually contributed to the degradation of European races and hindered the production of higher men, the evolution of humanity towards the superman.

If we now consider the religion of suffering, not in regard to its consequences, but as a symptom, we immediately perceive what it signifies. This vast inundation of pity which we view with our own eyes at the present day is a manifest sign that man fears suffering more and more; that he has become weak and effeminate, and that, dominated by the instinct of one animal in a herd, he more and more fears whatever may disturb his security and well-being: and not only does he fly from suffering himself, but he cannot even bear the thought of suffering in others; moreover, he does not dare to make others suffer in the name of justice—all this, let it be known, merely through weakness of character, and not out of magnanimity or generous disdain of the wrong done him. The merciful man extends his pity even to criminals and law-breakers: "There comes a moment in the lives of peoples when society becomes blind, enervated even to the

point of taking the part of the man who has broken the law—and doing this in the most earnest fashion imaginable. Punish! The very fact of punishing seems to him to have something iniquitous about it. It is certain that the idea of ‘punishment’ makes him afraid: would it not be sufficient for him to put the law-breaker where he could no longer injure others? Why then punish! . . . : to punish is so painful!”\* The ideal towards which this beast in a herd is tending is for a small share of happiness to be assured to every one with a minimum of suffering: pain is considered as “something which ought to be abolished.” Now Nietzsche—and this is perhaps one of the finest parts of his doctrine—is convinced that the fear of suffering is one of the most contemptible things in the world. Suffering is, indeed, humanity’s great educator; it is suffering which has conferred upon man his highest claim to nobility: † “You want, if possible—and there is not a more foolish ‘if possible’—*to do away with suffering*; and we?—it really seems that *we* would rather have it increased and made worse than it has ever been. Well-being, as you understand it, is certainly not a goal; it seems to us an end; a condition which at once renders man ludicrous and contemptible—and makes his destruction *desirable*. The discipline of suffering, of great suffering—know ye not that it is only *this* discipline that has produced all the elevations of humanity hitherto? The tension of soul in misfortune which communicates to it its energy, its shuddering in view of rack and

---

\* *Good and Evil*, Aph. 201.

† *Op. Cit.*, Aph. 44.

ruin, its inventiveness and bravery in undergoing, enduring, interpreting, and exploiting misfortune, and whatever depth, misery, disguise, spirit, artifice, or greatness has been bestowed upon his soul—has it not been bestowed through suffering, through the discipline of great suffering? In man *creature* and *creator* are united: in man there is not only matter, shred, excess, clay, mire, folly, chaos; but there is also the creator, the sculptor, the hardness of the hammer, the divinity of the spectator, and the seventh day—do ye understand this contrast? And that *your* sympathy for the 'creature in man' applies to that which has to be fashioned, bruised, forged, stretched, roasted, annealed, refined—to that which must necessarily *suffer*, and is *meant to suffer*? And *our* sympathy—do ye not understand what our *reverse* sympathy applies to, when it resists your sympathy as the worst of all pampering and enervation? So it is sympathy *against* sympathy."\*

Another grave symptom of decadence is the almost general triumph in Europe of the democratic ideal.

In spite of the apparent opposition between this ideal and the ideal of Christianity and religion, they are in reality identical in their essential tendencies. In Christianity, in the religion of human suffering as in the cult of equality, we find the same principal characteristics—the hatred of the weak for the strong, and the desire of a life free from suffering. Christianity makes all men equal before God, and promises them perfect happiness beyond the grave. Democracy would have all men equal before the

---

\* *Good and Evil*, Aph. 225.

law, and urges them on to bring about their ideal of perfect happiness on this earth.

Democracy desires to create a Society from which inequality will be banished, in which all men will have the same rights, the same duties, and an equal share of happiness, in which there will be no more hierarchies, in which no one will either obey or command, in which there will be neither masters nor slaves, neither rich nor poor, but an amorphous mass of citizens, each one equal to his neighbour. This is the idea towards which all democracies are tending, no matter what flag they may be marching under, whether they call themselves Republicans, Socialists, or Anarchists. They are at one in rejecting all higher authority, in wishing for "neither God nor master"; in proscribing all kinds of privilege. In this respect, Anarchists simply show that they are more logical than Socialists and in a greater hurry to achieve their object. They have a common aversion for justice, and are inclined to look upon all punishment as an iniquity. They have a common faith in their religion of pity, in their dread of all pain, in conviction that suffering must be abolished. They all have faith in the herd "in itself"; they believe that every individual can and must find his own happiness in the happiness of the whole body social, and that this social happiness can be obtained by every one showing pity to every one else, and by universal brotherhood. These ideas have been so deeply implanted in modern thought that Europe has now almost ceased to produce men who possess the instinct of mastery to any great extent. An original master of the



stamp of Napoleon is very, very exceptional in our age, and has excited enormous enthusiasm among mankind, who instinctively always turn towards those leaders who are truly able to command. As a general rule, those who govern to-day only exercise this power with a kind of inner remorse, to such an extent are the values of slave morality universally admitted. To defend themselves from their bad conscience, they have recourse to hypocritical sophisms, and endeavour to make their privileged situation harmonise with the precepts of the prevailing morality: they regard themselves as the executors of orders emanating from a higher power (tradition, law, God), as the "first servants of their country," or "the instruments of the common weal."\*

The same levelling instinct is also shown by the manner in which the European of the present day considers the relationships between man and woman.†

Nietzsche looks upon the inequality of the sexes as a necessary law, the reason he gives being that love has not the same importance for man as for woman; in the life of man, indeed, it is merely a simple episode. In him, the highest instinct is the will to power, the desire to extend his range of mastery in an ever wider circle. The ceaseless struggle against the forces of nature and against

---

\* *Good and Evil*, Aph. 199; cf. *Zarathustra*: The Bedwarfing Virtue, sec. 2.

† I have taken part of the argument which follows from an article which I published on the subject in *Cosmopolis*, May 1897, p. 460 foll.

the competing desires of other men, the constant affirmation of his own personality, such is the great task which requires his time and strength. If he gave himself up entirely to love, if he devoted all his life, thought, and activity to the love of woman, he would only be a slave and a coward, unworthy of the name of man and of the love of a true woman. On the other hand, love and children are everything to a woman; "Everything in the life of a woman is an enigma," teacheth Zarathustra, "and everything in woman has a solution which is called 'Childbirth.'"\* Love is hence the decisive event of her existence. Contrary to the case of a man, she must obtain her honour and glory by being "the first in love," in giving herself up entirely and unreservedly, body and soul, to the master she has chosen. It is in this renunciation of her own will that she must seek her happiness, and she is all the more admirable, all the more perfect, as this giving of herself up is the more complete and final. "Man's happiness," said Zarathustra again, "is: I will. Woman's happiness is: He will."† The woman who loves must give herself up entirely to the man, who, in his turn, must accept this gift manfully: so wills it the law of love, a law which is at times tragic and painful, and places the barrier of an insurmountable antagonism between the two sexes. A woman is made to love and obey, but woe to her if the man, whether through weariness or inconstancy, becomes dissatisfied with his conquest, to find that his gift is

---

\* *Zarathustra*: Old and Young Women.

† *Ibid.*

but of little value, and sets out towards new loves ! Man must dominate and protect ; he must be rich and powerful enough to live what might be called two lives ; to seize his own share of happiness for himself, and also to furnish happiness to her who has put her trust in him : but woe to him if he fails to carry out this heavy task, if, having been able to make himself loved, he has not the strength to keep in the fire of this love. Love once deceived turns into contempt, and the woman vows an implacable and merciless hatred to the man whom she thinks unworthy of her, whom she accuses of having caused her to spoil her career.

Our modern age no longer willingly accepts this natural antagonism between man and woman, as it also does not accept the no less natural opposition between master and slave. In the same way as it has attempted to glorify the slave, so also has it attempted to make woman divine. Nietzsche is far from believing in this worship of the "eternal feminine," of seeing in woman a creature of a higher nature, with more refined instincts, with a more delicate and certain moral sense, and capable of guiding humanity towards its higher destiny. It is man, in his opinion, to whom the chief rôle belongs, it is man who must be the master, and the master who is feared. His is the greater physical force, the higher reason, the more generous heart, and the more constant and energetic will. Woman is "discreet." She possesses in a greater degree than man a certain practical reason which permits her to see things as they are, to discern quickly the shortest means to attain a given end. But

her nature is not so rich or deep as that of man ; she seldom goes further than the surface of things, she is frivolous, sometimes even niggardly and pedantic. "Man should be trained for war, teacheth Zarathustra, and woman for the recreation of the warrior : all else is folly." \*

Woman is not an idol ; she is only a fragile and precious toy, but a dangerous one also, which, for a manly nature, is an additional charm. She is formidable when under the influence of her passion, whether love or hate, for she has preserved the primitive savageness of the instincts more than man : we find in her the cunning tricks of the cat, the tiger's claw which suddenly makes itself felt under the velvet paw, the heartless egoism, the undisciplinable and rebellious nature, the disconcerting and illogical strangeness of passions and desires. And this is why she has need of a strong master capable of guiding her, and, if necessary, of putting a stop to her freaks. If she inspires fear, she can also charm by her delicate grace, by her capacity for adorning herself, displaying her physical and moral qualities in a thousand different forms, and, above all, she inspires pity, much pity, for she seems to be exposed to suffering, easier to wound. She needs more love, she is condemned to more disillusionments than other creatures. It is not indeed the "doll" kind of woman who excites Nietzsche's wrath to the greatest extent. His execrations, and his most furious sarcasms, are directed against the "emancipated" woman, who has lost

---

\* *Zarathustra* : Old and Young Women.

both the fear and respect of man; who can no longer give herself up to him, but insists upon treating him as an equal; who resents the homage and consideration of the sterner sex towards the weaker woman as an insult, and who would even compete with him in the struggle for life. Nothing is more hateful to him than the blue-stocking who would take part in literature, science, or politics—except perhaps the lady clerk, who, in this modern society (in which the industrial spirit has got the better of the artistic and warlike spirit), aspires to judicial and economic independence, protests loudly against the state of slavery in which she is held, and organises noisy campaigns to obtain rights equal to those of men.

Nietzsche cautions women that they are taking a false step in trying to be rivals of men; that they are on the point of losing their influence, and of lowering themselves in public esteem. It is to their interest to appear to men as creatures of an entirely different nature, afar off and inaccessible, difficult to understand and to govern, vaguely formidable but also frail, worthy to be pitied, and requiring an infinite amount of consideration. But they themselves are now throwing off this mysterious halo, they are unlearning feminine modesty, ready as it once was to be roused by contact with all kinds of ugly or vulgar reality. Mingling freely with the multitude, and even striving to elbow their own way through the mob of egoistic appetites, woman is depoetising herself! And at the same time, under the pretext of artistic culture, she is losing her nerves—especially by the abuse

of Wagnerian music—and is thus becoming unfitted for her natural vocation, which is the bringing of fine children into the world. In a word, all Europe is becoming uglier; it is tending to transform itself into a huge lazar-house or hospital. Without severe sorrows, but also without very great joys, an uninteresting multitude of men, equal in their mediocrity and impotence, lead a dejected life on this earth without hope and without an object.

“Behold,” saith Zarathustra, “I show you the last man.”  
 “What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?” So asketh the last man and blinketh.

The earth hath become small, and there hoppeth thereon the last man, who maketh everything small. His species is ineradicable like that of the flea; the last man liveth longest.

“We have devised happiness,” say the last men, and blink.

They have left the regions where it was hard to live; for they need warmth. One still loveth one’s neighbour and rubbeth against him; for one needeth warmth.

Falling ill and being distrustful, they consider sinful; they walk warily. He is a fool who still stumbleth over stones or men!

A little poison now and then—that maketh pleasant dreams. And much poison at last for a pleasant death.

One still worketh, for work is a pastime. But one is careful lest the pastime should hurt.

One no longer becometh poor or rich; both are too burdensome. Who still wanteth to rule? Who still wanteth to obey? Both are too burdensome.

No shepherd, but one herd! Everybody wanteth the same. Everybody is equal. He who hath other sentiments goeth voluntarily into the madhouse.

“We have devised happiness,” say the last men, and blink.\*

---

\* *Zarathustra*, Pref. sec. 5.

Slave morality, the ascetic ideal, the domination of the priest, all rest upon a collection, although a truly great collection, of lies. It is not that Nietzsche sees in this fact a refutation of Christianity; for truth itself has for him no absolute value; but he sees a danger in it, an opportunity for destruction. The flock of degenerates and its leader, the ascetic priest, are obliged to close their eyes to the evidence of facts that they may uphold, against the repeated contradictions of reality and experience, their table of erroneous values, and their fantastic interpretation of the universe. If the patient became aware of his true state; if he learnt to recognise where health really lay; if he perceived that the whole treatment of the priest consisted in trying to make him forget the real illness he was suffering from by giving rise to an artificial excitement which really aggravated this disease instead of curing it, the whole edifice of Christianity would at once fall to the ground. The degenerate would seek effectual relief either at the hands of a doctor, or in the arms of death. Now the priest has an instinctive presentiment of this danger. This also is why he always seeks to preserve the "faith" among his followers; that is to say, the unreasoned, instinctive conviction which disregards the reality of facts. This faith, at bottom, is nothing but the desire at all costs to maintain an illusion which is thought necessary to life: it is the fear that truth may perhaps be *bad*, and that it is not revealed to man before he is strong enough to bear it. In every epoch, therefore, the priest has always looked upon laic wisdom as his mortal enemy, this positive science which dares to study

the world apart from any religious faith ; all means have seemed good to him which prevented man from contemplating things with an open mind, or from being loyal and sincere towards himself and looking upon reality without deforming it. And this is something that Nietzsche never pardons him. If the reader would understand something of the bitter spirit of hatred which meets us on every page of the *Antichrist*, and not be content to see in those vitriolic and passionate invectives merely a symptom of coming insanity (which is a convenient but rather summary way of getting rid of an embarrassing problem), he must recognise to what a point the spirit of Christianity—as Nietzsche defined it—must have grievously offended his most profound instincts. He willingly forgives it for all the sufferings it has caused humanity : what does it matter, indeed, if a man suffers and his pain ennobles him? Now it is certain that religious faith has formed some singularly interesting souls. Nietzsche has no difficulty in recognising that, taken as a whole, the revolt of the slaves in morality has greatly enriched the human species, and remains the most important fact and the most poignant drama of universal history. He even willingly admires the magnificent logic in the lying of the Christian priest, and the incredible amount of energy which he must have exhausted in upholding an imaginary table of values during two thousand years ; he would admire it even more if he could recognise in it a perverse but self-conscious will, under no illusion as to the end it was endeavouring to attain, and the means it used for this purpose. But what disgusted



Nietzsche, and what shocked him when he looked at his picture of Christianity, was that cloud of insincerity in which it was enveloped, that ambiguous mixture of blindness and knavery, that lying innocence which, according to him, characterises men of faith. The deepest instincts of his aristocratic nature, his ungovernable conscience, his love of physical and moral "cleanliness," his courage in thinking out his ideas to the very end, all rose in revolt against such duplicity. He turns away with intense disgust from those men in whom this voluntary illusion has become such an integral part of existence that they do not know themselves when they are deceiving and when they are sincere, and who even lie quite innocently without their conscience troubling them, the voluntary prisoners, or, perhaps, more often, the involuntary prisoners of the illusion in which they live. And he solemnly declared that Christianity was guilty of having soiled, corrupted, and poisoned the intellectual and moral atmosphere of all Europe. All the efforts of the Church have, nevertheless, been unable to prevent sciences from developing, or human thought from contemplating the reality of facts face to face. There is to-day in Europe a huge army of scientists, almost all of them materialists, positivists, or atheists, who live apart from any religious belief, and who even treat the religious instinct with the most disdainful contempt. These it would seem, at the first glance, are the natural adversaries of the domination of the priest. How does it happen then that their conception of life, founded on the observation of reality, has not long ago put an end

to the Christian illusion? How have these friends of nature, life, and health been unable to succeed in preventing the almost general triumph of the values established by Christianity?

Nietzsche's answer is ingenious and original. The men of science, he says, do not believe in science, and, consequently, do not oppose a new ideal to the religious ideal;—or, if they believe in science, and put forth a solution to the problem of life, they borrow the elements of that solution from the ascetic ideal. In other words, men of science are either mediocre craftsmen, incapable of creating a new table of values, or refined and sublimed ascetics whose ideal does not differ in its main points from that of the priests. Take, first of all, the "common" scientist, the honest workman of science. Nietzsche irreverently compares him to an old maid. Is he not, like her, barren, very honourable, somewhat ridiculous, and, in the main, not very well satisfied with his lot?

"Let us look a little more closely," adds Nietzsche, "at what the man of science is. In the first place, he belongs to an ignoble race of men, possessing the virtues of ignoble races; in other words, those who do not command, who have no authority, and who are not sufficient unto themselves; he is a workman, making no bones about falling into line with his colleagues; he is well-balanced both in his abilities and in his needs. He recognises his equals by instinct and knows what is necessary for them: for example, the little corner of independence and of green meadow, without which there is no peace of mind in one's work, the necessary tribute of honours

and popularity . . . the sunshine of fame, the perpetual consecration of his worth and utility, indispensable for overcoming at every moment that inner distrust which is found in all dependent men and herded animals. The scientist, as is indeed only right, is afflicted with the illnesses and defects of an ignoble race. He is puffed up with mean envy, and has the eye of a lynx for discovering everything, abject in natures the greatness of which is beyond his reach. What is especially liable to make a scientist dangerous and evil is the inner conviction that he possesses the mediocrity of his race: this Jesuitism of mediocrity which instinctively endeavours to annihilate the exceptional man, and always seeks to break every distended bow—or rather to unbend it—but to unbend it with respectful consideration, with a gentle hand and insinuating pity, but nevertheless to unbend it: this is the particular art of Jesuitism which has always been able to introduce itself as the religion of sympathy.”\*

The scientist is, in general, quite detached from any positive belief; the German scientist, in particular, even finds some difficulty in taking the problem of religion seriously; he is rather inclined to look upon it with somewhat contemptible pity, and feels an instinctive repugnance for the intellectual insincerity which he presupposes in every believer. It is only for the study of history that he is at length able to find some sort of respect, tintured with fear or gratitude, for the work accomplished by the religious man. But his esteem

---

\* *Good and Evil*, Aph. 206.

remains purely intellectual; even by his very instinct he is far from sympathising with such a man, and in practice he will avoid having anything to do with him or those who think like him. In his mind and heart he is imbued with the idea that the man of faith is an "inferior" type of humanity, and that the man of science infinitely surpasses him. Nevertheless, how great an error is all this! What a gap separates a good example of a religious man—a man of strong will, sick, it is true, but fighting victoriously by the force of his will against sickness, the creator of values, sure of the end he is striving to reach—from this honest scientist, this "presumptuous pigmy," who has no faith in himself or even in his science, who works mechanically to divert his thoughts, to prevent himself from thinking and to withdraw from the consideration of inconvenient problems—a good work, of course, and useful in the fashion of the labourer, the mason, or the carpenter, the thoroughly mediocre; the work of a man who was made to be directed, to be commanded, but who is incapable, absolutely incapable, of creating a new value and willing strongly for a long period.\*

Let us suppose this average type brought to its utmost perfection; let us suppose that the objective man has been realised, the man into whom the surest scientific instinct completely blossoms without a single flaw, and what shall we have obtained even then? Nothing more than a mirror, *i.e.* an instrument and not a will: "The objective man is in truth a mirror," says Nietzsche, "accustomed to prostration

---

\* *Good and Evil*, Aph. 58.

before everything that wants to be known, with such desires only as knowing or 'reflecting' imply—he waits until something comes, and then expands himself sensitively, so that even the light footsteps and gliding past of spiritual beings may not be lost on the surface and film. Whatever 'personality' he still possesses seems to him accidental, arbitrary, or still oftener, disturbing; so much has he come to regard himself as the passage and reflection of outside forms and events. . . . He does not know how to take himself seriously and devote time to himself: he is serene, not from lack of trouble, but from lack of capacity for grasping and dealing with his trouble. . . . Should one want love or hatred from him—I mean love and hatred as God, woman, and animal understand them—he will do what he can and furnish what he can. But one must not be surprised if it should not be much—if he should show himself at this point to be false, fragile, questionable, and deteriorated. His love is constrained, his hatred is artificial, and rather *un tour de force*, a slight ostentation and exaggeration. He is only genuine so far as he can be objective; only in his serene totality is he still 'nature' and 'natural.' His mirroring and eternally self-polishing soul no longer knows how to affirm, no longer how to deny; he does not command, neither does he destroy. 'Je ne méprise presque rien,' he says with Leibnitz. . . . The objective man is an instrument, a costly, easily injured, easily tarnished, measuring instrument and mirroring apparatus, which is to be taken care of and respected; but he is no goal, no outgoing or upgoing, no complementary man in whom the rest

of existence justifies itself, no termination—and still less a commencement, an engendering, or primary cause, nothing hardy, powerful, self-centred, that wants to be master ; but rather only a soft, inflated, delicate, movable potter's-form, that must wait for some kind of content and frame to 'shape' itself thereto—for the most part a man without frame and content, a 'selfless' man. Consequently, also, nothing for women, *in parenthesis.*" \*

Likewise impotent, but for another reason, are sceptics of all shades. The men of science are workers, more or less perfect instruments, but sceptics are temperaments enfeebled by an excessive culture, souls which have no longer the energy to will, and which are consequently decadent. There are, of course, innumerable varieties of sceptics, from the vain-glorious, mediocre man, the low comedian of thought, who seeks to assume the profitable and "distinguished" attitude of the dilettante, to the smarting soul who is endeavouring to unravel the mystery of the universe, and who, in the course of his peregrinations through the realms of the mind has become withered, faded, worn-out, and attenuated till he is nothing but an empty and inconsistent shadow. Zarathustra, too, the prophet of the superman, brings in his train one of these poor wandering spirits who has accompanied him in all his intellectual adventures, who in the course of his career has abjured every consoling belief, broken every idol, lost faith in great names and great words, and who, in the end, has lost sight of his object and

---

\* *Beyond Good and Evil*, Aph. 207.

wanders silent and desolate through the world, without love, without desire, and without a country, and to whom the prophet, usually so harsh, speaks in accents of sympathetic pity : \*

“Thou art my shadow,” said Zarathustra at last, sadly.

“Thy danger is not small, thou free spirit and wanderer. Thou hast had a bad day : see that a still worse evening doth not overtake thee.

“To such unsettled ones as thou, seemeth at last even a prisoner blessed. Didst thou ever see how captured criminals sleep? They sleep quietly, they enjoy their new security.

“Beware lest in the end a narrow faith capture thee, a hard rigorous delusion. For now everything that is narrow and fixed seduceth and tempteth thee.

“Thou hast lost thy goal. Alas, how wilt thou forego and forget that loss? Thereby—hast thou also lost thy way.

“Thou poor rover and wanderer, thou tired butterfly.”

But science does not only produce objective men and sceptics ; it also brings forth men of faith. It does not always content itself with establishing facts and saying : what do I know? It, too, can at times express wishes and proclaim a table of values, but how does it set about it in such a case?

“There is a point in every philosophy,” says Nietzsche, “at which the conviction of the philosopher appears on the scene ; or, to put it in the words of an ancient mystery—

*Adventavit asinus  
Pulcher et fortissimus.*”†

In other words, every philosopher pretends to

\* *Zarathustra* : The Shadow.

† *Good and Evil*, Aph. 8.

bring us his system as a purely logical construction, as a work of pure *reason*. Now this is an illusion. The conscient life of every man has its roots in his inconscient life. His desire to know the truth, however disinterested it may appear, acts in reality for the profit and under the inspiration of another more powerful and hidden instinct. In the system which is, in appearance, the most impersonal and the most geometrical possible, there is concealed a profession of faith. A philosopher's theories are his confessions, his memoirs. He is, in reality, not a pure intellectual, but a cunning advocate, pleading the cause of his prejudices—of his moral prejudices as a rule—it may even be said that he is rather an unscrupulous advocate, who, less honest than the priest, endeavours to make his "beliefs" pass for rationally established "truths." Now, these "beliefs" which are at the bottom of all systems of philosophy, and which form, to some extent, their principle of life—these "beliefs" are simply borrowed from the ascetic ideal; the priest and the philosopher, however, are, more often than not without knowing it, not enemies but allies.

Take for example Kant, the father of German philosophy. Kant is, from Nietzsche's point of view, merely a semi-disguised Christian. He proves, in fact, that his entire philosophical work tends to put out of reach of the attacks of reason two of the most dangerous errors of humanity: the notion of a real world, or a world of noumena, opposed to the world of appearances, or phenomena; and faith in the absolute value of the moral law, the Categorical Imperative. Now, these two notions are at bottom



nothing but the metaphysical translation of the essential dogmas of Christianity.

What, indeed, is the belief in a real world as distinct from the world of appearances? It is simply the philosophical equivalent of that fundamental notion of all theology; God is the first cause of the universe perceived by the senses, and the true life of man is the life in God. In the brain of the metaphysicians, the living idea of a good God, the God of the suffering, became subtilised, sublimated, and faded; they transformed it into an immense spider which weaves the world out of its own body; they made it the *ideal*, the *pure spirit*, the *absolute*, the *thing-in-itself*.\* Now this *thing-in-itself*, this *real world*, is simply pure nothingness: and this is an illusion, the progressive disappearance of which Nietzsche relates in these words:—

#### HISTORY OF AN ERROR.

(1) The true world, accessible to the sage, the pious man, and the virtuous man: he lives in it; he *is* this world.

(The oldest form of this idea, relatively ingenious, simple, convincing.—Paraphrase of this axiom: "I, Plato, *am* Truth.")

(2) The true world, inaccessible at present, but promised to the sage, the pious man, and the virtuous man ("to the sinner who repents").

(Progress of this idea: it becomes more subtle, captious, incomprehensible—it becomes *feminine*, a Christian.)

(3) The true world, inaccessible, indemonstrable, problematical; conceived only by thought, it is a consolation, an obligation, a Categorical Imperative.

(The old sun is still seen in the background, but is

---

\* *Antichrist*, sec. 17.

separated from the spectator by the fogs of criticism : the idea becomes subtle, pale, northern, "Königsbergian.")

(4) The true world—inaccessible? In any case never attained, *unknown* also. Hence it carries with it neither consolation nor redemption nor obligation : what, indeed, can an unknown thing compel us to do?

(Dawn. Reason's first yawn. Positivist cock-crow.)

(5) The "true" world—an idea which serves no purpose, and does not even create an obligation—a useless idea, which has become superfluous : hence, a *refuted* idea : let us suppress it.

(Clear day ; breakfast ; return of gaiety and good sense ; Plato's blush of shame ; tumult of all the free spirits.)

(6) We have done away with the "true world" : what world is left to us? The "world of appearances," perhaps? . . . But no ! When abolishing the "true world" we also abolished the "world of appearances" !

(Noon : the instant of the most fleeting shadow ; end of the longest error ; humanity's apogee ; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA !\*)

The God of the Christians was, as we have just seen, the God of all those who suffer and all those who are tending towards death. Instead of incarnating, like the pagan gods, the joyful acceptance of life, the will to power which says "yea" to all that brings life with it, he personified everything that, in the heart of degenerate man, showed bitterness towards real life and the hope of a chimerical beyond. The "true world" of the metaphysicians is, in the main, identical with him : he is only represented by a word, void of any real substance. The Christian

---

\* *Twilight of the Idols* : How the true world at last became a fable.

God was the symbol of a negation ; that of the philosophers is pure nothingness. In the same way, the will which tends towards this God, if we look at it closely, is only the aspiration towards nothingness. Even to-day, the most advanced philosophers, those who believe themselves to be emancipated from all religion and from all prejudice, have still an uncompromising belief in truth. All those sceptics, all those "objective" men, all those agnostics who hold themselves stoically aloof from every indemonstrable hypothesis, who rest content with the proving of an unimportant fact, so as to avoid a hasty generalisation and the errors that accompany it ; who refuse to say "Yes" or "No" in regard to any doubtful questions—all these people, these "conscientious ones of the spirit," who represent the intellectual and moral pick of humanity, are ascetics at bottom. Let us analyse their belief. The will to attain to truth at any cost may be interpreted in two different ways. It may mean "I will at all costs not be deceived," or "I will in no circumstances either deceive myself or others." Now the first interpretation is unlikely. Man may desire truth out of prudence and fear if it were undeniably established that truth was essentially beneficial. But it is not so. If it is a "truth" which begins to impose itself gradually upon enlightened minds, illusion is at least as beneficial and as necessary to humanity as "truth." For Nietzsche, illusion, lying, is perhaps the essential condition of life. "The falsity of a judgment," he says, "is not for us an objection to this judgment ; it is perhaps on this point that our language will sound most strangely

to modern ears. For us the question is this: To what extent is it useful for the preservation or development of life, for the preservation or perfecting of the species? And we are inclined on principle to affirm that the most false judgment (synthetic judgments *a priori* are of this number) are the most indispensable for us: that if humanity refused to admit the fictions of logic, to gauge reality by the aid of the purely fictitious world of the Unconditioned, of the Absolute, to falsify life continually by means of numbers, it would not be able to live; that to renounce false judgments would be to give up life, would be the negation of life.\* But if lying may be beneficial and truth harmful—and this is just what is felt by the modern lover of *truth at any price*—it follows that the man of truth does not aspire to truth out of interest or fear, but because he will not at any cost deceive either himself or others. In his inner mind, therefore, he sets such a value upon truth, that everything, even happiness, even the existence of humanity, must be subordinate to it. He believes in truth as in an absolute, metaphysical value. Let us put it shortly by saying that he calls "truth" what the Christian calls "God." And Nietzsche concludes: "there is no doubt about it; the truthful man—truthful in the extreme and dangerous sense which faith in science supposes—affirms thereby his faith in a world other than that of life, of nature, of history, and from that very moment predicates this 'otherworld.' Well! what can he do with its contrary, with this world, our

---

\* *Good and Evil*, Aph. 4.

world—except to deny it! . . . But it is easy to see what I am aiming at, namely this, that it is always a *metaphysical belief* upon which our faith in science is based; that we thinkers of to-day, we atheists and anti-metaphysicians, we, too, borrow the flame that animates us from that fire lighted many centuries ago, from that Christian faith, which was likewise the belief of Plato: that God is truth and that truth is divine. . . .” \* The modern apostle of truth has not dared to cast doubts upon these two supreme values of our old table of values; he has not dared to ask himself: “What is the value of truth?” or, what amounts to nearly the same thing: “What is the value of the Categorical Imperative and the morality which has commanded us to seek for truth?” He stopped on the threshold of the formidable problem of “Truth” and Morals; he did not say to himself, Why should man wish at all costs to know this Nature which we catch a glimpse of to-day and perceive to be a perpetually blind and unintelligent power, quite indifferent to good and evil, magnificently fecund, ceaselessly giving birth to new forms of life, only to sacrifice them, calmly and impassibly, to her senseless combinations? Why, indeed, should man sacrifice everything he has to such a divinity? Seen from this point of view, the modern passion for truth appeared to Nietzsche to be not unlike that ascetic cruelty which, from time immemorial, has incited man to sacrifice his most precious belongings to God. At first he offered up his first-born, and later on, in

---

\* *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 344.

the Christian epoch, the ascetic sacrificed his natural instincts. "Finally, what still remained to be sacrificed? Was it not necessary in the end for men to sacrifice everything comforting, holy, healing, all hope, all faith in hidden harmonies, in future blessedness and justice? Was it not necessary to sacrifice God Himself, and out of cruelty to themselves to worship stone, stupidity, gravity, fate, nothingness? To sacrifice God for nothingness—this paradoxical mystery of the ultimate cruelty has been reserved for the rising generation; we all know something thereof already."\*

Thus, the apostle of knowledge, the "conscientious one of the spirit," who does not fortify himself in scepticism, but believes in truth, who has the courage to set up an ideal, to affirm his belief in a supreme intellectual and moral value, is at bottom an ascetic, who abjures human existence for some kind of a Beyond, a pessimist who turns away from Life, since he refuses to lend himself to the illusion and lying necessary for all life—a nihilist, who, like the Christian, seeks in reality to throw humanity into the abyss of death.

---

\* *Good and Evil*, Aph. 55.

## CHAPTER V.

### NIETZSCHE'S SYSTEM (CONTINUED)—POSITIVE SIDE: THE SUPERMAN.

#### I.

MODERN Europe is, according to Nietzsche, very ill. Undeniable symptoms of decadence are everywhere making their appearance. It would seem that overpowering fatigue is crushing the man of the present day, and that, after having traversed the long road from the earth-worm to the ape, and from the ape to man, he is now seeking stability and repose either in ignoble mediocrity or in death. In one place, levelling democracy would make him an ugly and contemptible beast in a herd. In another, the Christian priest, the philosopher, and the moralist would fain withdraw him from earth and show him a chimerical beyond to which he must sacrifice his life. The democratic state is a degenerate form of the state: the religion of human suffering is a morality of invalids; the Wagnerian art which is triumphing at the present moment is an art of decadence. Corruption and pessimism are showing themselves at all stages of modern culture, even the highest. The types of higher humanity to which

Zarathustra offers the hospitality of his grotto to all, without exception, decadents, unfortunates who are suffering from being what they are; who are choking with disgust at the sight of modern man, and who despise themselves. First of all, we have the pessimistic soothsayer who sees symptoms of death everywhere and teaches "All is vanity, nothing serves for anything; it is useless to seek, there are no more Happy Isles." Then come the two kings who have left their kingdom because, not being the first among men, they no longer wish to command others. Further on, we have the "intellectually conscientious one," the "objective scientist" who devotes his life to the study of the brain of the leech. Then the "old magician," the eternal comedian who plays every rôle and deceives all men, but who can no longer deceive himself, and seeks, his heart torn with sadness and disgust, for an original genius; "the last of the popes," who cannot be consoled for the death of God; the "most hideous of men," the murderer of God—for God has died, choked by pity through having contemplated human misery and sickness; the "voluntary beggar," who, disgusted with man civilised to excess, looks for the secret of happiness in the cows that pensively chew the cud in a corner of a meadow; finally, the "shadow," the sceptic, who, by dint of running through all the realms of thought, has lost himself, and henceforth wanders through the world without any end in view. All these representatives of the higher European culture are suffering from a deep-seated complaint; they glide through life uneasy, gloomy, abashed, like the tiger who has leaped and



missed his prey, or the player with a run of ill-luck. The "masses," and everything the masses call "happiness," sicken them. On the other hand, all the higher values once worshipped by humanity under the names of "God," "Truth," "Duty," have disappeared from them. Material satisfaction is no longer sufficient to satisfy them, and they do not believe in an ideal. Can humanity, then, be on the point of halting in its progress, detaching itself from life, aspiring to nothingness?

No, teaches Nietzsche, decadence does not necessarily lead to nothingness; it may be the preliminary condition of a new life, a better state of health. It is certainly not possible to go backwards, to lead humanity back to what it was in preceding ages. "We must continue to advance, I say, we must continue to go step by step further into decadence." But as in the autumn the leaves become brown and fall, only to re-blossom in the spring, so it is possible that our present state of decadence is merely a prelude to a regeneration, that humanity will die out when giving birth to a higher form of life. From this point of view, it is perhaps permissible, so Nietzsche thinks, to consider the words "Decadence," "Decomposition," "Corruption" as unjustly contemptuous terms for describing the autumn of a civilisation. Humanity, pregnant with a new world, is suffering the pains of child-bearing. This, too, is why Zarathustra does not pretend to bring any relief for the misery of the higher man; he knows, indeed, that man must suffer even more to scale the highest heights. The inward grief of the higher men, their disgust with the multitude and

with themselves, is necessary to stimulate them, to drive them on further and higher. If they themselves are defective types of humanity, what does it matter? The more precious a thing is in its essence and the rarer it is, the more waste is necessary to obtain a perfect specimen. The higher man is like a pot in which the future of humanity is being prepared—in which all the germs which will at some future time appear in the light of day are fermenting, boiling and working together in the darkness; and more than one of these precious vessels happens to get cracked or broken. . . . But what does it matter! If one particular individual turns out badly, does it follow that all humanity has done the same? And if humanity itself has not reached perfection, again what does it matter? A man, taking Nietzsche's celebrated comparison, is a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman. He is, therefore, not an end but a bridge, a passage. Let man, therefore, perish that the Superman may live. "I teach you the superman," saith Zarathustra to the assembled crowd. "Man is something that must be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass him? All beings hitherto have created something higher than themselves, and ye want to be the ebb of that great tide, and would rather go back to the beast than surpass man?"

"What is the ape to man? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame; and just the same shall man be to the superman, a laughing-stock and a thing of shame.

"Behold I teach you the superman.

"The superman is the meaning of the earth.

Let your will say : the superman *shall* be the meaning of the earth." \*

## 2.

What is the superman, and how can man create him? The superman may be thus defined: the state to which man will attain when he has renounced the present historical values, the Christian, democratic, or ascetic ideal which has to-day overrun all modern Europe, to return to the table of values drawn up by the noble races, by the Masters who themselves *create* the values which they recognise instead of receiving them from an outside source. Of course, it is by no means a question of travelling backwards, of regenerating, after centuries of civilisation, the great "blond beast" of early ages. Man must not lose any of his knowledge, aptitudes, or new strength acquired in the course of his long and painful experience; but he must break up the old table of laws which at present hinder him in his march forward, replacing them by new commandments. Man must give birth to the Superman by self-elevation (*Selbstaufhebung*), to make use of an expression often employed by Nietzsche.

This transition from man to the superman may, to some extent, be compared with the evolution which engendered the ascetic according to Schopenhauer. In the opinion of this great pessimist, grief may first of all lead a man to renounce his own individual will, and consequently to suicide. But this is not sufficient to set him free: to be saved, he must give

---

\* *Zarathustra*, Pref. sec. 3.

up not only the individual form of life which has fallen to his lot but the will to live *in general*; this is the price of supreme mitigation. In Nietzsche's opinion, grief is likewise the powerful incentive that drives man towards salvation. Man at first suffers from what he is *as an individual*; he knows his deep and painful disgust of himself, and this disgust impels him to asceticism and pessimism. This is the stage of the higher men whom Zarathustra gathers together in his cave. But says the prophet to them, "Ye do not suffer enough to please me! For ye are only suffering from yourselves; ye have not yet suffered from man."\* It is only when he has attained that high degree of pain and disgust that man will draw from the very excess of his suffering the necessary energy to take the last step, to annihilate himself in giving birth to the superman. Having arrived at its highest point, pessimism will engender triumphant optimism.

Let us see in what respect, according to Nietzsche, the superman will differ from man of the present day.

One of the characteristics which specially distinguish the morality of the superman from the morality which is recognised to-day is that the one appeals to all men without distinction, whilst the other, by its very essence, must be the lot of a very small number of higher minds. Contemporary Europe, as we have seen, is resolutely democratic and believes in the natural equality of men. Nietzsche, on the contrary, believes in the necessary

---

\* *Zarathustra*; The Higher Man, sec. 6.

inequality of men, and desires an aristocratic society divided into well-defined castes, each having its own privileges, rights, and duties: the lowest caste is that of the small and mediocre men, all those whose natural vocation it is to be a cog in the great social machine. Not only agriculture, commerce, and industry, but also science, requires workmen who find satisfaction in carrying out a special task for which they are trained, and who are modestly content with obeying and carrying out their ordinary work with regularity and discipline. They are clearly slaves, or, if you like, "exploited ones," since at their own cost they maintain the higher castes to which they owe obedience. Thus they cannot be spared from privation and suffering, since reality itself is harsh. But in a well-ordered state, these people must lead a life which is relatively surer, quieter, and above all happier than that of their superiors; having no responsibilities, they have nothing to do but live. Religious faith is for them an inestimable benefit. It throws a ray of sunshine on the misery of their poor, semi-animal existence. It teaches them humble self-contentment and peace of mind. It ennobles for them the harsh necessity of submitting to the will of others. It leads them to the beneficent illusion that there is a universal order of things in which their place is set aside for them, and in which they have their own useful work to do. "For you, belief and slavery!" Such is the share allotted to them by Zarathustra in his ideal society. Just above them comes the caste of those who direct, the guardians of the law, the preservers of order and the warriors; at their head is

the king, the supreme leader of all. They carry out to some extent the rough work of power. They are the intermediaries, who transmit the will of their real masters to the crowd of slaves.—Finally, we have the premier caste, that of the Masters, the “creators of values,” which gives impetus to the whole social organism. The members of this caste must perform among men the rôle performed by the God of the universe as conceived by Christians. It is for the Masters, and for them alone, that the morality of the superman has been made.\*

This morality is not only distinguished from traditional morality by the fact that there is an aristocratic law for the “happy few”; it is also in radical contradiction to it by the fact that it is thoroughly anti-idealistic. According to the Christian or ascetic morality, the virtuous man is he who makes his life conform to an ideal, and who sacrifices his “egoistic” inclinations to the cult of the True, of the Good. . . . On the contrary, according to Nietzsche, the wise man is essentially a creator of values; that is his great task; indeed, nothing in nature is of any value in itself; the world of reality is an immaterial substance which has no interest other than that which we ourselves give to it. The true philosopher is hence the man whose personality is powerful enough to create the “world that interests men.” He is the poet of genius, in whose soul is formulated the table of values in which

---

\* On Nietzsche's ideas in regard to hierarchy, see *Good and Evil*, Aph. 229; the *Antichrist*, Aph. 57; Appendix to *Zarathustra*, sec 10; Appendix to *Dionysos-Dith.*, No. 64 foll.

the men of the given epoch believe, and who, consequently, determines all their actions. He is a contemplator, but his vision is only the supreme law that sets whole generations in motion; and all the great deeds of men of action are only the concrete and visible translation of his thought. He creates with every freedom and independence, heedless of good or evil, or truth or error; he creates his own truth; he creates his own morality. He is an intrepid experimentalist (*Versucher*) ceaselessly looking for new forms of existence, who, in the course of his fearful experiments, risks his life without trembling, and risks also his own happiness and the happiness of all the inferiors he drags in his train. He is a sublime and audacious player of a terrible game with chance, the stakes being life or death. The wise man, according to Nietzsche, is thus not a pacifier; he does not promise men peace and the quiet enjoyment of the fruits of their work. But he exhorts them to war; he dazzles their eyes with the hope of victory. "You shall seek your enemy," saith Zarathustra, "you shall fight your fight, you shall do battle for your thought! And if your thought succumbs, your loyalty must rejoice at its defeat!

"You shall love peace as a means to new wars, and the short peace more than the long.

"I do not counsel you to work, but to fight. I do not counsel peace, but victory. Let your work be a fight, let your peace be a victory!

"A good cause, ye say, sanctifies even war; but I say unto you that a good war sanctifies every cause. . . .

“For your enemies ye must have hateful adversaries, not contemptible adversaries. Ye must be proud of your enemy. Then the successes of your enemy will also be your successes.”\*

The open war of rival and contrary forces is indeed, in Nietzsche's opinion, the most powerful instrument of progress; it shows where there is strength, where there is weakness, where there is physical and moral health, where there is disease. It constitutes one of those dangerous “experiments” undertaken by the wise man to further the progress of life, to test the value of an idea, of a thought, from the point of view of the development of life. Hence, war is beneficial, good in itself; and thus Nietzsche predicts, without dismay or regret, that Europe is not far from entering into a period of great wars when nations will fight with one another for the mastery of the world.

While the ancient table of values set pity in the first rank of values, Zarathustra, on the other hand, teaches that the will is the highest virtue: “Behold the new law, O my brethren, that I promulgate for you: become hard!”† The creator must indeed be hard, as hard as a diamond, as hard as a sculptor's chisel, if he would model the shapeless block of chance in accordance with his own will; if it be his ambition to inaugurate new values, to leave his stamp upon whole generations, even to mould the will of future humanity, to inscribe upon it as upon sheets of brass his own individual will. Pity is

---

\* *Zarathustra*: War and Warriors.

† *Zarathustra*: Old and New Tables, sec. 30.



for him not a virtue, but a great temptation and the most terrible of all dangers. The "last sin" of Zarathustra, the most fearful assault he had to suffer, was pity. From the height of his solitary cave, he hears from the bottom of the valley the despairing appeal of the higher men, who implore and cry to him, "Come! Come! Come! It is the time, the great noon time!"\* If he has pity upon their miseries, if his heart feels softened at the sight of their suffering, it is all over with him; he is conquered; and he has need of all his energy in order that he may not succumb to the temptation. While he travels through his domain, seeking the despairing wretches who are calling him, he penetrates into a lonely spot as desolate as the kingdom of death. "In this place arose the summits of red and black rocks; not a blade of grass, not a star, not a single bird's song. It was a valley from which every animal had fled, even the beasts of prey, only horrible large green serpents went there to die when they grew old. For this reason, the shepherds called the valley Serpents' Death. In this dismal spot he suddenly perceives, sprawling in the middle of the way, a hideous, shapeless, and scarcely human form, and, at the moment when, blushing with shame at having seen such a monstrosity with his own eyes, he was turning to leave the spot as quickly as possible, a voice reached his ears, not unlike the death-rattle in some one's throat, or the water which gurgles through the night in a drain pipe: 'Zarathustra, read me my riddle. Speak! What is the vengeance

---

\* *Zarathustra*: The Cry of Distress.

upon the witness? . . . Tell me who I am.”—And, overwhelmed with great pity, Zarathustra gives way like an oak that has long resisted the woodcutter’s hatchet and suddenly falls heavily, terrifying even those who have been trying to cut it down. But he soon came to himself again, and his face assumed an expression of hardness :

“I recognise thee,” he said in a hard voice, “thou art the *murderer of God!* Let me pass on my way.

“Thou couldst not endure the man who saw thee, who saw thee suddenly in all thy horror, thou, the most hideous of men! Thou hast been revenged on this witness.” \*

Zarathustra has come victoriously out of the ordeal in which God perished. The God of love is dead, choked by pity, pity for all of the defects and all the most hideous ugliness of humanity. His pity knew no shame; but ransacked the most obscure and unclean corners of the human soul. And that is why he died; for man could not endure such a witness of his ignominy. Zarathustra himself felt the blush of shame rising to his forehead. He lowered his eyes before the horrible spectacle of human misery, and continued his progress, knowing that there was more nobility and true grandeur in pursuing his course than in throwing away his life zealously and losing himself by succouring an unfortunate man for whom there was no remedy. In doing this, he not only drove away death, but won the love of the most hideous man: in truth, by his

---

\* *Zarathustra* : The Ugliest Man.

silence and abstention he had "respected" the great misfortune and ugliness before his eyes. He spared him his pity. The most hideous man, who hated God and merciful men, willingly bowed down before the "hardness" of Zarathustra, and was glad to become his guest.\*

The wise man, according to Nietzsche, must thus be hard towards himself as well as towards others. He gives up for his own part every kind of well-being, quietness, and peace. He well knows that humanity is not evolving towards a fixed and determined end, but that everything is in a perpetual state of becoming, and that life is something that "must always surpass itself." † He knows, too, that the individual can never flatter himself that he has arrived at his goal, that all peace is for him "a means to new wars," and that his life must be an endless chain of more and more dangerous adventures. He thus does not seek for happiness, but only for the fun of the game; and if, when playing dice, he makes a lucky throw, he immediately asks himself, "Am I playing with loaded dice?" He knows that joy and pain always come together. Man may go through life without much pleasure and without suffering pain, in a state of mind bordering on indifference, but only on condition that he reduces his vitality to the minimum. He who would know great joys must also inevitably know great griefs; for oscillation towards the one is compensated for by oscillation towards the other.

\* *Zarathustra*: The Ugliest Man; cf. *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 338.

† *Zarathustra*: Self-surpassing.

The "creator of values," who believes in life, who wishes life to be as intense and as powerful as possible, also wishes for the wildest oscillations from the point of equilibrium; he would know the extremes of happiness and unhappiness, the most intoxicating victories and the most terrible defeats. He must be ready for supreme grief and supreme hope together; for triumph and annihilation at the same time. Zarathustra dies when reaching the culminating point of his existence. The superman is at once the supreme victory and also the end of man.

As the wise man must be hard towards himself, and not flinch from any suffering, so likewise must he be hard towards others. There are unfortunates whom it is inhuman to relieve. There are degenerates whose death should not be delayed. "Everywhere," saith Zarathustra, "resounds the voice of those who preach death, and the earth is covered with people to whom death ought to be preached—or rather 'eternal life,' it is all the same to me—if only they betake themselves quickly away."\*

To the pessimists, the discouraged, the melancholy, the miserable, the ascetics of every kind who go about saying "Life is but suffering," the wise man should reply, "Then set about putting an end to that which is nothing but suffering, and let your moral law be this, 'Thou must kill thyself, thou must spontaneously escape from life!'"† The earth must not be a lazar-house inhabited by the sick and discouraged, or else the healthy man will perish from disgust and pity. To spare future generations the

---

\* *Zarathustra* : The Preachers of Death.

† *Ibid.*

depressing sight of misery and ugliness, let us kill all those who are ripe for death, let us have the courage not to retain those among us who are falling, but let us push them so that they may fall even more quickly. The wise man must thus be able to bear the sight of the sufferings of others: more than that, he must *make others suffer* without being overcome by pity, just as the surgeon wields his knife with a firm and sure hand without troubling himself about the agony of his patient. This is something that calls for true greatness of mind. "Who will ever reach the height of greatness," asks Nietzsche, "if he does not feel within himself the power and the will to *inflict* great sufferings? To be able to suffer is the least matter: weak women and even slaves are often past masters in this art. But not to be shipwrecked on the rocks of one's inner distress and uncertainty when one is in the act of inflicting great pain and hears the cry of this pain—that is great; that is an integral part of all greatness." \*

Finally, in all the adventures of this life, the wise man must exhibit the serenity of the good-natured player, the joyous innocence of a child amusing itself, the smiling grace of the dancer. In the *Three Metamorphoses of the Spirit*, Zarathustra teaches that the soul of man must first of all resemble the camel, which takes heavy burdens upon its back: the soul, in other words, patiently endures the worst trials, and voluntarily submits itself to the strictest discipline to accumulate a heavy load of experience.

---

\* *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 325.

Secondly, it must resemble the lion, which says, "I will," and treads under foot whatever threatens to menace its liberty. It must overcome the great dragon of the Law, which says "thou shalt," and must free itself violently from the yoke of the ideal, the true, the good, which formerly seemed to weigh upon it so lightly. Lastly, to become fecund and create new values after having destroyed the older ones, it must become like a little child: "Innocence is the child, and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a game, a self-rolling wheel, a first movement, a holy Yea." Thus the human soul which would fain rise to the highest summits of wisdom must learn to play, to gambol and frolic in all innocence. It must become light and free from care, conquer the demon of heaviness in all its forms, renounce pessimism and melancholy, solemn behaviour, tragic attitudes, sullen seriousness, uncompromising inflexibility: "Woe to those who laugh!" said the old law: and this is, in Zarathustra's view, the worst of blasphemies. The sage must, on the contrary, learn the laughter of the gods: he must make his way towards his goal, not slowly and with apparent regret, but "dancing" and "flying." It is by knowing how to laugh that he will be able to console himself for his set-backs, and by knowing how to dance and fly that, like a whirlwind or a tornado, he will be able to sweep safely over the black morass of melancholy. Man must learn to "dance beyond himself," to "fly beyond himself"; in other words to rise above himself, to surpass himself on the wings of laughter and the dance. This is the supreme advice of Zarathustra's wisdom.

“ This crown of the laughter, this rose-garlanded crown : I myself have put on this crown, I myself have consecrated my laughter.

“ This crown of the laughter, this rose-garlanded crown : to you, my brethren, do I cast this crown ! Laughing have I consecrated ; ye higher men, learn, I pray you—to laugh ! ” \*

## 3.

“ Whoever, like myself, prompted by some enigmatical desire, has long endeavoured to go to the bottom of this question of pessimism . . . has perhaps just thereby, without really desiring it, opened his eyes to behold the opposite ideal : the ideal of the most world-approving, exuberant, and vivacious man, who has not only learnt to compromise and arrange with that which was and is, but wishes to have it again, *as it was and is*, for all eternity, insatiably calling out *da capo*, not only to himself, but to the whole piece and play ; and not only to the play, but actually to the Being who requires the play—and makes it necessary ; because he always requires himself anew—and makes himself necessary.—Well ? And would not this be a —*circulus vitiosus deus* ? ” \*

It was in the month of August, 1881, at Sils Maria, that the hypothesis of the “ Eternal Return ” flashed into Nietzsche's brain, a hypothesis which is at once the base and the coping-stone of the

---

\* *Zarathustra* : Higher Men, secs. 17, 18, 20.

\* *Good and Evil*, Aph. 56.

philosophy of the superman. It may be summed up thus:\*

The sum total of the forces constituting the universe appears to be constant and determined. We cannot, indeed, suppose that it is diminishing; for if it did get smaller, however little, it would by this time have altogether disappeared, for an infinity of time has already passed away up to the present moment. Neither can we conceive that this sum total will go on increasing indefinitely: to grow in the manner of an organism, for example, it must take in nourishment, and nourish itself in such a way as to produce a surplus of force: and whence can this nourishment, this principle of growth, be derived?—to suppose an indefinite progression in the forces of the universe would be the same thing as believing in a perpetual miracle. There remains, then, the hypothesis of a sum total of constant and determined forces—and consequently not infinite. Let us now suppose that these forces react on each other at haphazard, by virtue of the mere action of fortuitous combinations, which necessarily give rise to the following combination: what will be brought about in an eternity of time? In the first place, we must admit that these forces have never attained a position of balance, and that they never will attain such a position. If this combination—which is clearly not impossible—could be brought about some day, it would have been brought about already; for an infinity of time has already passed away up to the present moment—and the world would be

---

\* On the origin of this hypothesis *v.* appendix.



immobile for ever and ever, since it is impossible to conceive how a state of perfect equilibrium, once attained, could ever become anything else. Thus we are face to face with the fact that a sum total of constant and determined forces brings about, after an infinite lapse of time, an unbroken series of combinations. Now, since time is *infinite*, and the sum total of forces *determined*, there will necessarily come a moment when—however large we may suppose the sum total of the forces to be, and however colossal we may conceive the number of combinations which they could bring about—the natural and unguided action of these possibilities will produce a combination which has already been realised. But this combination will, in its turn, by virtue of the universal determinism, bring about the entire series of combinations already produced; so that this universal evolution brings about the same phases for an indefinite period of time, and travels round in an immense circle for all eternity. Every single life is but an imperceptible fragment of the total cycle: hence every individual has already lived the same life an infinite number of times, and will continue to live it again and again through all eternity. “This world has already attained to every state that it can possibly attain to, not only once, but an infinite number of times. The statement applies to this very moment: it *existed* once before, many times, and in the same way it will come again, all its forces being distributed exactly as they are to-day: the rule applies to the moment which gave birth to this one, and to the moment to which this one will in its turn give birth. Man! Thy whole life,

like the sand in an hour-glass, will return again and again and will continually run its course anew,—each one of these existences being separated from another only by that long minute of time necessary for all the conditions which gave birth to thee to be reproduced in the universal cycle. And then thou wilt once again find thy various griefs and joys, thy friends and enemies, every hope and every error, every blade of grass, every ray of the sun, and the same arrangement of all things. This cycle, of which thou art but a single grain, will appear again. And in every cycle of human life there always comes an hour when one individual, at first, and then several, and then all, are seized with the most powerful of all thoughts: the thought of the Eternal Return of all things—and on each occasion that is the noonday of humanity.”\*

This hypothesis of universal evolution inspired Nietzsche, from the very day on which it appeared on the horizon of his thought, with a feeling of tremendous enthusiasm, mingled, however, with an inexpressible horror. At first he kept the hypothesis entirely to himself. A general exposition of the new doctrine of the Eternal Return which had been drafted from the summer of 1881 onwards, remained unfinished.† It was in an aphorism of

---

\* *Nachträge to Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 216.

† The sketch of the Eternal Return which appeared in the first edition of vol. xii. of the *Werke* appears to have been incorrectly edited, and hence this first edition has been withdrawn. The new edition of vol. xii. does not attempt any arbitrary reconstruction of the sketch. On this point v. Horneffer's *Nietzsches Lehre von der Ewigen Wiederkehr*

the *Joyful Wisdom* that Nietzsche for the first time made public the idea of an Eternal Return as a sort of disquieting paradox. He supposes that a demon comes at a quiet moment and whispers the hypothesis at the thinker's ear. "Would you not throw yourself on the ground?" it concludes, "would you not gnash your teeth and curse the demon who would speak to you thus? Or have you survived that ineffable moment when you can answer 'thou art a god, and I have never heard more divine words'? If this thought takes possession of you, such as you are now, it will transform you, and perhaps blot you out for ever. That question, asked at every moment of your life: 'Do you wish this to happen once more, eternally?' would lay a formidable weight on all your activity! Or, again, how necessary it would be for you to love both yourself and life, so as not to wish for anything more than this supreme and eternal consecration and confirmation?"\*

Nietzsche, at this period, intended to devote ten years of his life to the study of natural history at Vienna or Paris, so as to try to give his hypothesis some scientific basis, and then, after years of silence, to enter the arena again as the prophet of the Eternal Return. Various reasons soon made him give up this intention, the principal one being that a superficial examination of the problem from a scientific point of view at once showed him the impossibility of demonstrating his doctrine of the Return in founding

---

*und deren bisherige Veröffentlichung*, Naumann, Leipzig, 1900, and cf. *Werke*, xii. 425 foll.

\* *Joyful Wisdom*, Aph. 341.

it, as he had thought of doing, on the atomic theory.\* But his hypothesis, undemonstrated and indemonstrable, nevertheless remained the pivot of his thought. The Eternal Return is the vast idea which Zarathustra brings to men, couching it in veiled words and expounding it with a kind of sacred horror.†

Indeed, we can easily understand the terrible anguish which must have taken possession of Nietzsche's mind from the day he believed in the doctrine of the Eternal Return, and when he had calculated the full effect of this hypothesis. It is scarcely possible, at first, to imagine a more disheartening solution to the problem of existence. The world means nothing: it is the work of blind destiny; there results from it a senseless and mathematical action of forces which combine among themselves, realising in haphazard fashion a certain number of possible groupings; universal evolution leads nowhere, but follows itself indefinitely by ceaselessly turning round in the same circle; this life which we are leading to-day is one which we shall re-commence eternally without any hope of change; and every minute of sadness, pain, or disgust shall be re-lived identically as it was, not only once, but an infinite number of times. Let us imagine the effect of such a revelation on degenerates, sick persons, pessimists, on all those whose griefs far outbalance their joys. In the

---

\* v. Mme. Andreas-Salomé: *Nietzsche in seinen Werken*, p. 224.

† *Zarathustra*: The Vision and the Enigma, sec. 1; The Convalescent; The Seven Seals.

minds of most men, it is true, such an idea as that of the Eternal Return will remain in quite an inoffensive form, for our imagination is not powerful enough to *realise* it, because the notions conceived by our intellect generally have but little effect, or none at all, on our sensitiveness. But Nietzsche on the contrary "lived" his theories: he philosophised with his whole being; and we can at once conceive how the Eternal Return must have seemed to him, at certain times, like one of those terrible nightmares which freeze the blood and almost stop the beating of the heart. His "hardness" for the unfortunates and the outcasts of life will now appear to us in quite another light. Now we can understand why, in thinking of them, he wrote: "Let them die quickly, let them commit suicide—and let them be killed, these unfortunates—before they are able to gauge the depth of the abyss of grief into which they have been plunged, before they can conceive the monstrous destiny which condemns them to drag their cross after them through all eternity with no possible hope of redemption!" And we can understand also why Nietzsche often wondered whether humanity could *assimilate* this doctrine without immediately sinking into a vertigo of despair and horror, and why he looked upon the thought of the Eternal Return as a sort of Medusa's head, the very sight of which annihilated all those who were not powerful enough to bear the revelation of such a truth.

An unusual power of mind, indeed, an uncommon vital energy, are both necessary for one to bear the idea of the Eternal Return. He only

can bear it who has a personality sufficiently powerful to say: If life has no sense in itself, I can give it one. I am an integral part of that nature which wishes itself to return time and again, which tirelessly pursues, for all eternity, the same round of existence. I shall rise, then, until I can find artistic delight in the incomparable splendour of fecund life, looking upon it as the most magnificent of all sights. I shall take an interest in that marvellous interaction of combinations which has already produced so many good and beautiful things, which has given birth to Man, and which will, perhaps, likewise give birth to the Superman. I shall wish with all the fervour of my soul that this blind fate may one day realise, beyond man, some miraculous, dazzling success. I shall at all events live in this hope, and all my existence shall be guided by this single thought: I wish that the circle within which life moves eternally may be as resplendent and as marvellous a diamond as possible; I shall thus enjoy my life to the full, in the hope that my thimble-rigging may lead to a happy result; and, if I lose, I shall console myself with the thought that another individual at least is reaching or will reach the goal of which I dreamed, and that thus the splendour of life will not be diminished.—Dazzled by this vision, intoxicated, inflamed by this formidable game which he is playing with chance, man will learn to look upon all his defeats, sadness, and miseries as the necessary ransom for his victories and joys, as the spur which ceaselessly urges him onward, upward, in the effort to surpass himself, to seek the realisation of higher

combinations. Then, adding up the account of his existence, he will find that the total of his joys will be greater than the total of his sorrows, and he will gladly accept, his heart overflowing with enthusiasm, the idea of living for all time the life he has just lived.

This is the conclusion come to by the "higher men" whom Zarathustra has assembled in his cave. When he has expounded his new table of values to them and shown them the true beauty and grandeur of life, when he has cured them of their pessimism and buoyed up their hearts, ready as they were to give way under the weight of disgust or sadness, he brings them together, as the shades of night fall, in front of his grotto, under the starry canopy of heaven.

There they at last stood still beside one another; all of them old people, but with comforted, brave hearts, and astonished in themselves that it was so well with them on earth: the mystery of the night, however, came nigher and nigher to their hearts. . . . Then, however, there happened that which in this astonishing long day was most astonishing: the ugliest man began once more and for the last time to gurgle and snort, and when he had at length found expression, behold! there sprang a question plump and plain out of his mouth, a good, deep, clear question, which moved the hearts of all who listened to him.

"My friends, all of you," said the ugliest man, "what think ye? For the sake of this day—I am for the first time content to have lived mine entire life.

"And that I testify so much is still not enough for me. It is worth while living on the earth: one day, one festival, with Zarathustra, hath taught me to love the earth.

"Was *that*—life?' will I say unto death. 'Well! once more!'

“My friends, what think ye? Will ye not, like me, say unto death: ‘Was *that* life? For the sake of Zarathustra, well! once more!’”\*

So Zarathustra has succeeded: the ugliest man, the abject monster whose hatred had killed God, representing to Him as he did the miseries, the defects, and the uglinesses of humanity, has perceived the beauty of life, and has understood that suffering is the necessary ransom of all happiness, and says “yea” to existence.

Whilst the prophet, surrounded by his disciples, enjoys the supreme intoxication of that hour of triumph, an old clock, with its grave tones, strikes the midnight hour—midnight, the solemn moment at which the dying day meets the new-born day, at which death holds out his hand to life: midnight, the hour of greatest silence, when the meditative soul opens up to receive its deepest intuitions, and deciphers the most hidden mysteries. And while the old clock confidently announces, with its twelve strokes, the moment when the mysterious passage from death to life is crossed once more, Zarathustra lets the higher men see the vast thought of the Eternal Return, enveloped in enigmatic verses after the manner of a mystic psalm perfumed with religious intoxication:

*Eins!*

O Mensch! Gieb Acht!

*Zwei!*

Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?

---

\* *Zarathustra*: The Drunken Song.



*Drei!*

“Ich schlief, ich schlief,—

*Vier!*

“Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht:—

*Fünf!*

“Die Welt ist tief,

*Sechs!*

“Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht.

*Sieben!*

“Tief ist ihr Weh—

*Acht!*

“Lust—tiefer noch als Herzeleid:

*Neun!*

“Weh spricht: Vergeh!

*Zehn!*

“Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit,—

*Elf!*

“Will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!”

*Zwölf!\**

---

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—M. Lichtenberger adds in a footnote a literal translation of this psalm, saying: “It is evident that no translation can render, even approximately, its strange

---

\* *Zarathustra*: The Drunken Song.

and yet musical poetry." I give Mr. Common's revised English version (Dr. Levy's standard English edition of *Nietzsche*, vol. iv. p. 279-80):—

*One!*

O man! Take heed!

*Two!*

What saith deep midnight's voice indeed?

*Three!*

"I slept my sleep!

*Four!*

"From deepest dream I've woke and plead:—

*Five!*

"The world is deep,

*Six!*

"And deeper than the day could read.

*Seven!*

"Deep is its woe—

*Eight!*

"Joy—deeper still than grief can be:

*Nine!*

"Woe saith: Hence! Go!

*Ten!*

"But joys all want eternity—

*Eleven!*

"Want deep profound eternity!"

*Twelve!*

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONCLUSION.

NIETZSCHE had the privilege—rare enough for a German philosopher—of not only being read and discussed by professional philosophers, but also by the general public. Within the last ten years above all, Nietzschean literature has increased in formidable proportions: the vast majority of literary and philosophical magazines and reviews have published articles on Nietzsche's work. He is "in the fashion" to-day, just like Wagner or Botticelli, Ibsen or Ruskin. Many of his admirers do not hesitate to see in him the deepest and most original thinker of modern Germany, the first moralist of his century, the Darwin of morality. As well as having his enthusiastic partisans, however, he has also his out-and-out adversaries, who consider him as ignorant, a fool, a man of unbalanced mind, a disturber of public morality and health. And I am inclined to believe that the majority of the public may be found between these two extreme divisions of opinion, somewhat undecided, attracted, on the one hand, by Nietzsche's "modernism" and the apparent oddity of his ideas, but, on the other hand, rather distrustful, and wondering how far they should take seriously the sparkling paradoxes of a thinker who

has thrown overboard every opinion which has hitherto been generally agreed upon. To put a fitting conclusion to this study of the philosopher, we shall try to indicate briefly the principal objections which have been made to Nietzsche's theories and the importance which we attribute to them, at the same time, however, avoiding the absurdity of pretending to give in a few pages the "true" solution of the complex and delicate problems which form the subject of debate.

Nietzsche's work has been criticised from two standpoints: some writers have merely tried to show that it contains "errors" of fact or apprehension; while others have sought to prove that it is dangerous from a moral point of view.

In the first place doubt has been cast upon the value of the arguments brought forward by Nietzsche to support his thesis. He endeavours—to mention a definite example—to corroborate, by arguments drawn from philology, his thesis that the values received by ancient civilisation were "aristocratic," and have since been replaced by slave-values: in support of this assertion he cites the Latin *bonus*, which he derives from a primitive form *duonus* (from *duo*, two), explaining it by "the man of discord, of war." In like manner he connects the German *gut*, good, with *Gott*, God, and with the name *Goth*; or again he recalls the various meanings of the German word *schlecht*, *schlicht*, which may mean "simple," "common" (*ein schlichter Mann*, a man of the people), and which may also mean "bad." Now, M. Bréal acknowledges that the majority of the linguistic facts quoted by Nietzsche are either

incorrect or not accurately interpreted.\*—Again, objections have been raised in the name of anthropology and history to the hypothesis of the blond and solitary "beast of prey" which Nietzsche places at the beginning of all European civilisations. It would seem that even pre-historic man himself was a "herded animal," that feelings of sympathy and solidarity had appeared even so far back as the higher apes, and that the Teuton of the epoch of the great invasions, of whom Nietzsche had specially dreamed when drawing his portrait of the "blond beast," was a vigorous but peaceful peasant, who did not wage war for the mere joy of killing, but for the purpose of securing arable land. Many of Nietzsche's historical theories have been treated as fables, *e.g.* his hypothesis of the "Jewish slaves' insurrection," his portraits of Jesus and the Apostle Paul in the *Antichrist*, his thesis of the development of Christianity and ascetic morality, his opinions concerning the Reformation and the rôle played by Luther.

Nietzsche's psychological analyses, too, have been declared to be erroneous, his interpretation of the "bad conscience," his theory of the notion of "sin" being a development of the material notion of "debt." Biologists have criticised the ideal of the Superman such as he conceives him: "The biological truth is," says Max Nordau, "that constant self-restraint is a vital necessity for the strongest as well as the weakest. It forms the activity of the highest and most human brain centres. If these are not exer-

---

\* *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique*, ix. 457.

cised, they waste away, *i.e.* a man ceases to be a man; the so-called Superman turns into a 'subman,' a beast, in other words. By the relaxing or suppressing of the cerebral inhibitory apparatus, the organism inevitably succumbs to the anarchy of its constituent parts, which is bound to lead to ruin, sickness, madness, and death." And, lastly, the doctrine of the Eternal Return has left some people incredulous; even such a benevolent Nietzschean critic as Brandes declares that Zarathustra's mysticism is "scarcely convincing."\*

What conclusions must we draw from all these criticisms from the standpoint of the value of Nietzsche's work?

Let us say in the first place that Nietzsche, especially in the second period of his life, did not profess to be, and could not indeed pass as, a man of erudition or a savant. The state of his health, and of his eyesight in particular, made reading out of the question for him, even for years at a time. He specialised only in philology, and from 1879 onwards he ceased to keep himself informed of the latest developments and discoveries in this science. In all other branches of science he was merely a dilettante, and of this he made no secret. He never aimed at carrying forward this or that science, or at vulgarising the results of certain sciences: his sole object was to formulate new problems or to propound old problems in a new way. And he is thus right—at all events, to a certain extent—in attaching merely secondary importance to the facts he

---

\* *Menschen und Werke*, art. Nietzsche.

makes use of to illustrate his theories. His etymologies and hypotheses regarding the meanings of words, for example, are neither certain nor deep ; but in the end this matters little to him : the facts he cites serve above all, in his mind, to show how moral problems *could* be touched upon with the aid of linguistics, and thus to stimulate linguists to guide their investigations with this aim in view. The intrinsic value of his own observations is quite a secondary thing for him, and, even if every one of his technical arguments were found wanting, Nietzsche, in spite of all, would have believed that he had done a useful work if he had been able, by his remarks, to excite the curiosity of a student of languages and urge him to examine into questions of a like nature. Now, in recent times more particularly, many writers have sought to throw light upon social facts with the aid of linguistic facts, and more particularly to acquire some conception of pre-historic civilisations by the comparative study of languages. I do not wish to attribute to Nietzsche the merit of having brought about this coincidence, but I mention it merely as an idea which he put forth, and to show that, based as it was upon facts which at first sight appear to be inaccurate, it is nevertheless not without a certain interest of its own.

Furthermore, in order that possible "errors" in Nietzsche's theories may be properly appreciated, we must not forget that all his work is essentially subjective. Now, the cult of *objective* truth is, as Nietzsche perceived very well, the most powerful modern form of the religious sentiment. From the savant we instinctively require a scrupulous respect

for reality: we wish him to be as impartial, as personal, as possible. We know very well that, in truth, objectivism is merely a decoy, that no one can completely shake off his personality and see things as they really are, that all truth is therefore individual to some extent, and that in a work of science the main point, perhaps, is not that the author has imbued himself with reality, but that he has imbued reality with himself. In spite of that, we hold unshaken belief in an "objective" truth, or, what comes to the same thing, a "universally subjective" truth, and, generally speaking, we value an author in proportion as his ideas seem to us to be in accordance with what we believe to be objective truth. Clearly it lies with us, if we are so disposed, to apply this standard to Nietzsche. We must, however, continually bear in mind that Nietzsche always and *above all* wished to seek himself, to know himself. We have seen how, on his own admission, he looked upon his teachers, Schopenhauer and Wagner: he was always less occupied in finding out what they were *in themselves* than in ascertaining how far they could reveal to him *his own* personality. Out of them he has made a "legend," the objective truth of which has been opposed: he himself has admitted that in *Schopenhauer as Educator* and in *Richard Wagner at Bayreuth* he has really depicted himself as philosopher and artist. Now, Nietzsche looked upon all reality as he did upon Schopenhauer and Wagner: he transformed it into "legends," highly attractive and curious, it is true; but of even greater interest as indications of Nietzsche's personality than as a description or



interpretation of the outer world. It is evident that, from the moment we begin to judge Nietzsche from this point of view, it is a matter of quite secondary importance to know whether, on this or that point of history, anthropology, or biology, his ideas are in general accordance with those hitherto received as objective truth. For the same reason, too, it is of no great importance for an adequate appreciation of Nietzsche's value to endeavour to ascertain in minute detail what he owes to his forerunners. It is certain that, despite his pretensions to complete originality, he shows, consciously or not, the influence of his contemporaries, and that his thought, when stripped of all its paradox and aggressiveness, is often much less new than it seems at first sight. Uncompromising individualism, the cult of the ego, hostility to the state, and protestations against the dogma of equality and the cult of humanity, are traits which are all found, nearly as strongly marked as they are in Nietzsche, in a thinker who is almost forgotten in our days, viz. Max Stirner, whose chief work, *The Lone One and His Own*, it is curious to compare from this point of view with Nietzsche's writings.\* The development of personality, of the single and incomparable "ego," is also the essential doctrine of the Danish thinker, Sören Kierkegaard,

---

\* In regard to Max Stirner I refer the reader to an article which I published on the anarchistic theories of this thinker in the *Nouvelle Revue* (15th July 1894, pp. 233 foll.), and, more especially, to Mr. J. H. Mackay's *Max Stirner, sein Leben und sein Werk*, Berlin, 1898. A comparison between Nietzsche and Stirner will be found in *Max Stirner und F. Nietzsche*, by R. Schellwien, Leipzig, 1892.

who, however, radically deviates from Nietzsche's course on account of his Christian tendencies. The aristocratic ideal so dear to Nietzsche appears once more in Flaubert's letters, and even to a greater extent in Renan's *Dialogues Philosophiques*. In his war against pessimism, Nietzsche found a lieutenant in Eugen Dühring. He shared with Eduard von Hartmann an aversion for socialists and anarchists, belief in the inequality of man and in the civilising virtue of war, and the conviction that pity cannot be regarded as the foundation of all morality.\* The doctrine of the Eternal Return was already expounded in Blanqui's *L'Eternité par les Astres* and in *L'Homme et les Sociétés*, by Dr. Le Bon. But if we have little hesitation in admitting that, on account of this or that doctrine, Nietzsche may be compared with many of his contemporaries, we must on the other hand recognise that, by his personality, he differs from them profoundly, although certain points of their ideas may seem analogous to his. Furthermore, Nietzsche felt an instinctive and sincere antipathy for the majority of these so-called allies: he hates Renan for his priest-like nature; he looks upon Hartmann as a charlatan; he execrates Dühring because his mind is thoroughly "plebeian," and in him Nietzsche sees only a caricature of himself. It

---

\* In regard to these different influences, v. Brandes, *Menschen und Werke*, p. 147, 151 foll., 171, 200 foll.—On the movement of anarchistic and individualistic ideas in modern Germany, v. T. Ziegler, *Die geistigen und sozialen Hauptströmungen des 19. Jh.*, p. 578 foll.—On the relative absence of originality in Nietzsche's doctrines, v. Stein, *Rundschau*, vol. lxxiv. p. 393 foll., and Nordau, *Degeneracy*, ii. 352 foll.

is clear that he wishes at all costs not to be confused with them, not because of that literary self-conceit which sees possible rivals everywhere with green-eyed envy, but because he feels so different from them by his moral nature, and because he has the feeling that the *person* of a philosopher is of much more importance than his *work*.

Of course, this point of view must not be pushed to extremes; and we cannot, by saying that Nietzsche's personality is of more importance than his works, deny any objective value to the latter. This would not only be a mistake, but also an injustice. I am fully persuaded that the historian and the philosopher can find innumerable remarks of interest scattered through his writings, remarks which are of interest *per se*, and not merely as manifestations of Nietzsche's ego. I have tried to show elsewhere the great interest of his judgments on Wagner—both the *Wagner at Bayreuth* and the *Case of Wagner*\*—for the historian who is endeavouring to acquire a just perception of the great musician. And it is absolutely beyond question that Nietzsche's opinions on many other points are well worthy of being discussed and taken into serious consideration. All I am trying to point out is that the value of Nietzsche's work does not lie only, or even chiefly, in the "objective" interest which his ideas may present to us. In this regard I fully agreed with the judgment expressed by M. Brandes, when he compares Nietzsche with his hated adversaries, the

---

\* See the conclusion of my study on *Wagner, poète et penseur*, Paris, Alcan.

English philosophers : " When we come to him after having spent some time in the company of English philosophers, we are in an entirely new world. English thinkers are all men of patient minds, their dominating tendency being to exhaust all sides of a question, and bring together a multitude of little facts out of which they may form a law. Rarely indeed do they attract the reader by their own personality, their ego seems for the most part by no means complex. Their merit lies in what they do rather than in what they are. Nietzsche on the contrary is, like Schopenhauer, a soothsayer, a seer, an artist, less interesting for what he does than for what he is." \* To appreciate Nietzsche's work at its proper value, it must not be studied like a scientific book, the importance of which is not measured by the quality of its author's wit, but by the sum total of exact knowledge, and especially of new knowledge, which it contains. We can apply to Nietzsche the paradox which he himself applied to Schopenhauer : a thinker's doctrine is in itself of little importance, any philosopher may be mistaken ; but what is better than all systems is the soul of the thinker himself : " There is in a philosopher what there never is in a philosophy, the origin of many philosophies : the great man."

It now remains for us to inquire into the other objection made to Nietzsche's work : we hear on all sides that it is pernicious from a moral point of view. Nietzsche is reproached with his reactionary instincts, his cynicism, his dilettantism, his egotism,

---

\* Brandes, *Menschen und Werke*, p. 199.

his harshness for the weak ; and, in Germany, above all, the diffusion of his doctrines and the formation of a " Nietzsche school " are denounced as public dangers. What are we to think of these attacks, which we meet with on every page of certain works about Nietzsche ? \*

Let us in the first place recognise that certain ideas of Nietzsche, *if they are misunderstood*, may serve as an apparent justification of very disagreeable moral doctrines. His aphorisms may be used in support of the most brutal egoism or the most unrestrained diletantism. Yet it is certainly not enough to be a " hustler," if we may make use of a current mode of expression, or a literary anarchist, to throw overboard all religious and moral prejudices and calmly despise one's contemporaries, to assert that one is living " according to Nietzsche." Nietzsche himself shows no indulgence to those who would fain play at being supermen, and Zarathustra severely interrogates such persons as seem inclined to pursue this dangerous course :

" Art thou a new strength and a new authority ? A first motion ? A self-rolling wheel ? Canst thou also compel stars to revolve round thee ?

" Alas ! there is so much lust for loftiness ! There are so many convulsions of the ambitions ! Show me that thou art not a lusting and ambitious one !

" Alas ! there are many great thoughts that do nothing more than the bellows : they inflate, and make emptier than ever.

---

\* v. for example, L. Stein's *Nietzsche's Weltanschauung und ihre Gefahren* (*Deut. Rundschau*, vol. lxxiv. p. 392 foll. and vol. lxxv. p. 230 foll.).

“Free, dost thou call thyself? Thy ruling thought would I hear of, and not that thou hast escaped from a yoke.

“Art thou one *entitled* to escape from a yoke? Many a one has cast away his final worth when he has cast away his servitude.”\*

Nietzsche expressly declares that his doctrine is only addressed to a small number of the elect, and that the multitude of mediocrities must live in obedience and faith. In justice, then, his theories cannot be condemned on the mere pretext that mediocre and impotent minds, swollen with vanity, have borrowed some of his precepts, arbitrarily detached from the general plan of his doctrine, in order to justify their egoistic enjoyment or their extravagant pretensions to greatness.†

Many moralists, however, not only condemn the excesses of certain apostles of the Superman—by no means commendable, it must be admitted—but they look upon Nietzsche’s whole doctrine as dangerous. What is the meaning of their hostility?

Nietzsche is a resolute individualist; and this fact brings down on him *a priori* the condemnation of a large number of writers. Modern man, in fact,

\* *Zarathustra*: The Way of the Creating One.

† In any case, we cannot on this account condemn Nietzsche’s doctrine unless we hold a moralist responsible not only for what he thinks and actually teaches, but also for the deformations which his ideas undergo when entering into minds unable to understand them. This is perhaps a thesis on which much might be said—see Paul Bourget’s *Disciple*—but which, I think, there would be no interest in discussing in regard to the particular case we are now dealing with.

is at once an individual and a "herded animal," to use Nietzsche's expression; that is, a member of a more or less important group—a family, a nation, humanity. Hence it comes about that he seeks happiness, power, and perfection for himself; and he likewise pursues the happiness, power, and development of the group of which he is a part. But it also happens in the life of every individual that cases arise where he thinks—rightly or wrongly, it matters not—that there is a conflict between his own egoistic interest and that of his group; and it is thus necessary for him to know which of the two interests must give way to the other. Now, it seems to me that a choice of this kind can be made only by virtue of an act of faith, or, if another term be preferred, by a kind of wager. In point of fact, we often bet by our acts, but more often also theoretically, when we adopt this or that moral principle and define this or that system of good and evil. Thus, by the very fact that all men are simultaneously individuals and herded animals, there are two chief kinds of wagers, according as the individual is dominated at a particular moment by the consideration of his own personality, or the consideration of the herd of which he forms part. Some are inclined, either in fact or in principle, to subordinate their egoistic happiness or the perfection of their ego to the interest of the herd—and they bet in favour of altruistic morality;—others are on the contrary inclined to subordinate the happiness or perfection of the herd to the interests of their own personality—and they bet on individualistic morality. Nietzsche, as we have seen, wagers

resolutely in favour of the individual. Now, the immense majority of modern men, if not by their acts in theory—by the doctrines they profess—bet in favour of herd morality. This contrast between absolutely radical principles is sufficient to raise an unsurpassable barrier between Nietzsche and the upholders of democratic or humanitarian doctrines. The aversion for Nietzsche shown in the “herd” is the natural counterpart of the exasperated hatred which he himself exhibits towards those who extol the altruistic ideal.\*

It is, however, not necessary to wager in an uncompromising manner for either of these two fundamental tendencies. We may regard both individualism and altruism as equally legitimate, and dream of a “harmonious” development of each of these tendencies. In fact, I think that no one will assert that, by his acts themselves, he has ever “bet” rigorously, whether for pure and simple individualism or absolute absolutism. And, in the same way, we hesitate more and more to condemn anything radically in theory, whether it be the individualistic instinct, or more especially the herd

---

\* When we represent Nietzsche as the enemy of altruistic morality, it is, of course, understood that we do not wish to show him merely as a cruel-hearted egoist, incapable of feeling pity and love: on the contrary, his egoism has its source in his *excess* of sensitiveness, and is as a matter of fact refined and sublimated altruism, which, by means of auto-suppression, has changed into individualism. Nietzsche thus stands beside the man of great pity, and is the antithesis of the “hustler.” As he is an atheist by religion and an immoralist owing to the strength of his moral conscience, so he is likewise an egoist on account of his altruism.



instinct, as in Nietzsche's case. We admit that there is a hierarchy of instincts, and we recognise that this hierarchy may vary in a certain degree from age to age, from people to people, and even from individual to individual. Now, from the time we agree to look at matters from this point of view, we must also cease from bringing an absolute judgment to bear upon Nietzsche's works. We may, for example, reason thus: Nietzsche's morality, it may be said, is one of the purest types of aristocratic and individualistic morality existing; a very fine and admirably logical specimen of a moral wager. On this account, therefore, it is a precious document for all those who are endeavouring to give unity and distinction to their life—just on the same account as the morality of Tolstoi, for example, which is a no less logical wager based on a hypothesis diametrically opposed to that of Nietzsche. The very fact that Nietzsche gives us a radical solution of the moral problem makes it much more easy for us to understand why, whether from a theoretical or practical point of view, he has so many immediate disciples and direct successors. The practical application of the doctrine of the superman calls for a fund of energy which is but rarely met with; and even Nietzsche himself admits that the exceptionally endowed beings he mentions in his works may have existed only in his imagination.\* He is displeased, however, if on the other hand he finds people, from a theo-

---

\* Letter written in 1878, quoted by Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche, *Leben*, ii. 149.

retical standpoint, anxious to go further than himself in the same direction; and it seems difficult, by reason of the exceptional and extreme character of his doctrine, for him to become the head of a true school: so far as we may judge from present appearances he will always remain a lonely man, a "solitary," in the eyes of posterity, as he was during his own life as a thinker. On the other hand, it is evident that he may come to exercise a considerable indirect influence by strengthening, whether in an individual or in a whole people, individualistic tendencies. And this influence must be considered as good or bad, not in an absolute way, but according to the moral character of the individuals or peoples on whom it is exercised. Such an influence, of course, may tend to destroy the moral equilibrium of natures in which the egoistic instincts have already been over-developed; but it may also, again, help other natures to attain their harmonious development by arming them against certain dangers and excesses brought about by the different forms of democratic, humanitarian, or ascetic morality. From this latter standpoint, it seems to me to be quite certain that Nietzsche's work may have a very beneficial effect at an epoch such as ours, the characteristic trait of which is scarcely a superabundance of physical and moral energy. Few thinkers have, to the same degree as he did, forced man to see himself as he is, to be sincere towards himself; few moralists have so cruelly brought into the light of day all the little white lies which the soul tells itself to dissimulate its own weakness, cowardliness, impotence, and

mediocrity ; few psychologists have penetrated more deeply into the miserable and squalid reality which so often hides itself behind the words "pity," "love of one's neighbour," and "disinterestedness." Nietzsche appears before us like a brusque and pitiless soul-doctor : the treatment which he prescribes for his patients is strict and dangerous to follow, but strengthening : he has no consolation for those who come to tell him of their sufferings ; he lets their wounds and sores continue to bleed, but he hardens them to pain ; he cures his patients radically—or kills them. The vulgar herd is somewhat doubtful of him, and looks at him with no little distrust and anxiety : it wonders whether he is not a bad man, and at times it even murmurs the word "executioner" ; it draws away from him and goes to another doctor, whose hand is not so heavy, whose tones are milder, and whose treatment is less dangerous and energetic ; and perhaps in doing all this the vulgar herd is not altogether wrong. On the other hand, however, Nietzsche is surrounded by a group of faithful followers who love this very roughness of his, his severity, his whole character, and who proclaim to all and sundry the certainty of his knowledge and the excellence of his method. And I think that these followers, too, are not deceived in their admiration or their love. They know, indeed, that it is not due to hardness of heart or inability to perceive pain that he shows himself so harsh towards suffering humanity ; they know, on the contrary, that life showed itself uncommonly rigorous towards him ; they believe that his tragic destiny gives him the right, perhaps, to

be less prompt in taking pity on human miseries and weaknesses ; and they reverently bow down to the brave and proud thinker who, amidst all the tortures of an incurable illness, never permitted himself to curse life, and who, under the continual menace of death or madness, maintained to the end, without a moment's weakness, his passionate hymn in honour of Life, eternally young and fecund Life, defying to the end that suffering which may have at last overpowered his reason but never bent his conscient will.

## APPENDIX.

---

IT is exceedingly curious to note that the characteristic and, in appearance, so truly original hypothesis of the Eternal Return—that hypothesis which seemed to Nietzsche to be the coping-stone of his work and likewise an awful mystery, the revelation of which must surely throw the world into consternation—was conceived and formulated about the same time by two French thinkers, Blanqui in 1871 and Dr. Gustave Le Bon in 1881, the latter being the very year when, at Sils Maria, the thought suddenly came into view in the horizon of Nietzsche's intellect. What is stranger still is that this almost simultaneous discovery was entirely fortuitous. M. Le Bon did not know of the existence of Blanqui's theory when he wrote *L'Homme et les Sociétés*. As for Nietzsche, it may be affirmed with certainty that he did not know his forerunners in this department. Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche never heard her brother speak of either; their works were not in his library, and the year 1883 was a period when Nietzsche's illness was at its worst, and his continual headaches, combined with weak eyes, made all reading an impossibility. We must therefore admit that the

three thinkers arrived independently at the hypothesis of the Eternal Return.

Blanqui's theory is set forth in *L'Eternité par les astres*, a kind of prose poem which the great agitator composed in 1871, during his captivity in the fortress of Taureau, and which was published at the beginning of 1872, partly in the *Revue Scientifique*, and wholly in book form. A summary of it may be found in M. Geffroy's *l'Enfermé* (Paris, 1897), pp. 389-481. It may be added that the analogy between Blanqui's cosmological dreams and Nietzsche's theory has been pointed out by M. Retté in an article in the *Plume*.

Like Nietzsche, Blanqui admits that, on the one hand, time and space are infinite, and that on the other hand the combinations which nature can bring about by means of her final elements are limited in number. For all her works she possesses say a hundred simple bodies and a universal mill, viz. the stello-planetary system. The number of combinations possible with these simple bodies is immense, but nevertheless limited; and it is with the aid of these combinations that the double infinity of space and time must be filled up. Besides these original combinations, however, these type-combinations, there must clearly be *repetitions*, endless repetitions, that the space may be filled. Innumerable replicas of our earth are hence developing in all imaginable ways, every possible variety of our planet exists somewhere and is repeated indefinitely. In the same way, the existence of every individual is repeated indefinitely: "He has complete twins and variant twins, who multiply continually and keep

on representing his own person, but who undergo only the last remnants of his fate. Whatsoever one may have been here below, he *is* that something elsewhere. Besides his entire existence, from birth to death, which takes place on hundreds of planets, thousands of different editions of it are to be seen elsewhere." . . . "What I am writing at this moment in a dungeon of the Taureau fortress, I have already written and will continue to write through all eternity on a table, with a pen, in clothes, and in circumstances, exactly the same as the present." . . . "We shall retrace our course in vain along the endless path of all the centuries to find a moment when we have not lived. For the universe has not commenced, and consequently neither has man." . . . "At the present time the whole life of our planet, from birth to death, runs its course, day by day on myriads of, so to speak, fellow-stars, with all its crimes and all its diseases. What we call progress is immured with every earth, and perishes with it. Always and everywhere in the terrestrial spheres we have the same drama, the same scenery, on the same narrow stage: a clamorous humanity, infatuated with its greatness, thinking itself to be the universe, and living in its prison, as in an immense space, soon to be shipwrecked in company with the globe which has borne with the utmost disdain the burden of humanity's pride. The same monotony, the same immobility, in other stars. The universe repeats itself without end, and prances upon space. Eternity plays the same pieces imperturbably in space." We can see from these quotations that there is an almost complete analogy

between the hypothesis which Blanqui thought he could deduce "from the spectral analysis and cosmogony of Laplace" and the theory of the Eternal Return which Nietzsche arrived at by moral considerations, and which he wished to confirm by scientific researches. Nietzsche lays greater stress upon the indefinite *succession* of the same phenomena in the infinity of time, while Blanqui's arguments are based rather upon the co-existence of the same phenomena in the infinity of space. At bottom, the thought of the captive in the dungeons of Taureau is in almost complete accord with that of the Solitary of Sils Maria.

No less striking is the analogy of Nietzsche's reasoning with that of Dr. Le Bon. In *L'Homme et les Sociétés*,\* the latter says, "But time is eternal, and there can be no repose. This silent and dead globe will not always roll its congealed mass in space. We can only conjecture what may be its far-off destinies, but nothing authorises us to think that it will always remain inert. Whether, obeying the laws of attraction that draw our solar system towards unknown regions of space, it ends by uniting with other systems; or whether contact with another celestial body will raise its temperature to such a degree as to melt it away, it is at all events doubtless destined to form a new nebulous body, whence, by a series of evolutions analogous to those which we have described, another world will arise, destined in its turn to be inhabited one day and likewise destroyed, without our being able to perceive a limit

---

\* Paris, 1881, vol. ii. 420.



to this everlasting series of births and destructions. Having never begun, probably, how can it end?

“ But if it is the same elements of each world which serve, after its destruction, to create a new one, it is easy to understand that the same combinations, that is to say, the same worlds inhabited by the same beings, may be repeated time and again. The possible combinations which a given number of atoms can form being limited, and time being unlimited, every possible form of development has necessarily been realised long ere this, and we can now only have repetitions of combinations which have already been attained. Numberless times, doubtless, civilisations like ours, and works identical with ours, must have preceded our own universe. Like Sisyphus, continually rolling the same stone uphill, we ceaselessly repeat the same task, without its being possible to set a limit to this fatal eternity. What unknown regions of the skies can contain the supreme Nirvana, that final repose dreamt of by the prophets of ancient India? Shades of past ages, ye who seemed to have faded away for ever into the mists of eternity, and whom the magic wand of science evokes at its will : hope not for rest ; ye are immortal.”

I offer no comment on these citations, which I leave to readers of Nietzsche. It is clear that very different conclusions may be drawn from them : some will see in them a new proof of Nietzsche's “ want of originality,” and others, again, will credit him with having given to an astronomical dream and a simple scientific hypothesis a profoundly tragic poetry, and a sublime moral signification, which they did not

possess—or at all events did not possess in the same degree—in the case of the French thinkers who first formulated them. For my own part, it seems to me that this coincidence is interesting above all because it shows us that one of Nietzsche's apparently most paradoxical ideas was not really the strictly individual production of an abnormal and morbid imagination, but that it was, so to speak, in the air between 1871 and 1881, since three such different thinkers as Nietzsche, Le Bon, and Blanqui arrived at it by independent routes, and that thus Nietzsche, even in his mystic theory of the Eternal Return, is the representative of a real tendency of the modern soul.\*

---

\* It is well known, of course, that the theory of the Eternal Return is to be found long before the nineteenth century. To trace its origin it would be necessary to go back to ancient Greek philosophy. In addition to what I have already quoted, I may add a strange confirmation which also belongs to the nineteenth century. An article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (18th April 1899) cites a passage from Heine, one of the additions to chap. xx. of the *Journey from Munich to Genoa*, where the theory is outlined: "Know, then, that time is infinite, but that the things within time are finite: they may be dissolved into minute particles, but these particles, these atoms, are strictly definite in number, and definite also is the number of forms which God created with them. To such an extent is this so that, after a long, long time, by virtue of the eternal laws of the combination of this eternal recommencement, all the forms which have already existed on earth will appear once again to meet, attract, repel, embrace, and lose each other as before." This passage must not be taken as the source of Nietzsche's thought; for it is not contained in old editions of Heine, and Nietzsche did not know the extract given here. This is a new "meeting," like that of Nietzsche, Blanqui, and Le Bon.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY.

I give below a list of Nietzsche's chief works, with the dates of their composition and publication :

HOMER AND CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY: Nietzsche's inaugural lecture at Basel University, a few copies printed for private circulation in 1869; published in 1896.

THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY: written between 1869 and 1871; published at the end of 1871, and dated 1872.

HOMER'S POETIC STRUGGLE: essay written in 1871-72; published in 1896.

ON THE FUTURE OF OUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: written in 1872; published in 1896.

PHILOSOPHY IN THE TRAGIC AGE OF GREECE: written at the beginning of 1873; published in 1896.

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD IN AN EXTRA-MORAL SENSE: written in 1873; published in 1896.

THOUGHTS OUT OF SEASON:

(1) DAVID STRAUSS; the confessor and writer: written and published in 1873.

- (2) THE USE AND ABUSE OF HISTORY: written during October and November 1873; published in February 1904.
- (3) SCHOPENHAUER AS EDUCATOR: written and published in October 1874.
- (4) WE PHILOLOGISTS: written in 1875; published in 1896.
- (5) RICHARD WAGNER AT BAYREUTH: written during 1875 and 1876; published in July 1876.

HUMAN,-ALL TOO-HUMAN, vol. i.: written in 1876 and 1877; published in May 1878.

HUMAN, ALL-TOO-HUMAN, vol. ii.: Consisting of "Mixed Opinions and Apophthegms," written between 1876 and 1878, and published in March 1879; and also of "The Traveller and his Shadow," written in 1879, and published at the end of the year, although dated 1880.

THE DAWN OF DAY: Written in 1880-81; published in July 1881.

THE JOYFUL WISDOM: written in 1881-82; published in September 1882. New edition, enlarged by the "Songs of Prince Free-as-a-Bird," 1887.

THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA: Part I., written in January and February 1883, published May 1883; Part II., written in June and July, 1883, published in April 1884; Part III., written 1884-85, privately printed (40 copies), 1885; first edition for the public, 1892. Nietzsche contemplated a fifth part, of which, however, only a few rough notes remain.

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL: written 1885-86; published August 1886.

THE GENEALOGY OF MORALS: written in June, and published in November 1887.

THE CASE OF WAGNER: written May-June, and published September 1888.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE IDOLS: written before September 1888, and published in January 1889.

THE WILL TO POWER: Nietzsche intended to divide this synthetic work into four parts, namely, The Antichristian; The Free Spirit; The Immoralist; and Dionysos. The first part, "The Antichristian," was written between September 3 and 30, 1888, and published in 1896; but the composition of the remaining three divisions was interrupted at different times by the "Twilight of the Idols" and "The Case of Wagner." Nietzsche's voluminous notes in connection with these parts, however, were carefully arranged by his sister and others, and the standard text of them appears in the "Taschenausgabe" of his works, vols. ix. and x., published in 1905. It is from this text that the English translation has been made, under Dr. Oscar Levy's editorship.

NIETZSCHE CONTRA WAGNER: selections from his works regarding Wagner, arranged towards the end of 1888, and published in 1896.

POEMS: written between 1871 and 1888, published in 1896; new and more complete edition, containing early poems, with a preface by Mrs. Foerster-Nietzsche, published 1898.

The complete works were published in German,

under the editorship of Nietzsche's sister, Peter Gast, and others, between 1896 and 1904. The first edition, not being textually accurate, was withdrawn from sale and a second edition issued. The standard text of the "Will to Power" is to be found in the "Taschenausgabe," issued from 1904 to 1906; and in this edition the works are likewise arranged in chronological order.

ECCE HOMO: Nietzsche's autobiography was published at the end of 1908. The edition was limited to 1250 copies, which were sold out on the day of publication, and the work has not yet been reprinted.

LETTERS: A complete edition of the correspondence was begun in 1900, and is now practically complete.

### WORKS ON NIETZSCHE.

Books and essays dealing with Nietzsche's life and philosophy are exceedingly numerous. Below are mentioned only the most important:

Mrs. E. Foerster-Nietzsche: *Das Leben Friedrich Nietzsche's*, three volumes. An important work for all interested in Nietzsche's life, containing as it does a large number of letters, extracts from the philosopher's diaries, early poems, and unpublished fragments of his work.

Mme. Lou Andreas-Salomé: *F. Nietzsche in seinen Werken*. A very curious and interesting psychological study, but nevertheless a book which must be looked into with caution. The authoress

was in the philosopher's confidence for five months, but he lost his good opinion of her. Nietzsche states that she never understood him, and his sister says that Mme. Andreas-Salomé has merely sketched a caricature of her brother's character.

Brandes, G.: *Menschen und Werke*, cap. Nietzsche. Brandes was one of the first to see Nietzsche's greatness and to draw him to the attention of the general public.

Kretzer, E.: *F. Nietzsche*, Leipzig, 1895.

Meta von Sils-Marschlins: *Philosoph und Edelmensch*, Leipzig, 1897.

Riehl, A.: *Nietzsche, der Künstler und der Denker*, Stuttgart, 1897; 3rd edition, 1901.

Gallwitz, H.: *F. Nietzsche, Ein Lebensbild*, Dresden, 1898.

Ziegler, T.: *Nietzsche*, Berlin, 1899.

Gaultier, J. de: *De Kant à Nietzsche*, Paris, 1900.

Horneffer, E.: *Vorträge über Nietzsche*, Göttingen, 1900.

Kalthoff, A.: *Nietzsche und die Kulturprobleme unserer Zeit*, Berlin, 1900.

Zeitler, J.: *Nietzsches Aesthetik*, Leipzig, 1901.

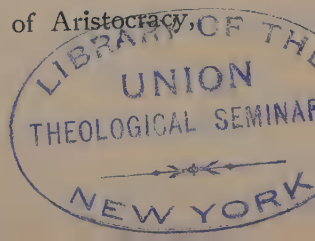
Roberty, E.: *Nietzsche*, Paris, 1902.

Fouillée, A.: *Nietzsche et l'immoralisme*, Paris, 1902,

Richter, R.: *Nietzsche, sein Leben und sein Werk*, Leipzig, 1903.

Drews, A.: *Nietzsches Philosophie*, Heidelberg, 1904.

Levy, Dr. Oscar: *The Revival of Aristocracy*, London, 1906.



Mügge, M. A.: Nietzsche, his Life and Work, London, 1908.

Ludovici, A. M.: Who is to be Master of the World? Edinburgh, 1909.

Kennedy, J. M.: The Quintessence of Nietzsche, London, 1909.

FINIS.

A 5772





**Date Loaned**

DEC 12 1977

Lichtenberger, Henri, 1864-

7 ... The gospel of superman; the philosophy of Friedrich  
13 Nietzsche. tr. from the French of Henri Lichtenberger, with  
an introduction by J. M. Kennedy ... Edinburgh and Lon-  
don, T. N. Foulis, 1910.

ix, 222 p. 20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>".

At head of title: Friedrich Nietzsche.

"Of the first edition of two thousand copies this is no. 626."

Bibliography: p. 217-222.

1. Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, 1844-1900.  
McFarland, tr.

1. Kennedy, John

ii. Title: Superman, the gospel of.  
12-38161

Library of Congress

B3317.L52

CCSC/ef

5772

